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## The London Charivari

RUSSIA has not yet, according to Mr. Sedov, Soviet delegate to the Astronautical Congress at Stockholm, developed an atomic rocket engine. "We will wait," he explained, "until the Americans finish their atomic rocket engine. Thus we will get information whether it is possible to build such engines, and get it without having to waste a lot of money ourselves." America is hardly likely to relish the role of trouble- and money-saver for the U.S.S.R., and the first faint gleam appears of a beneficent cold war of the future, a very cold war, a war of absolute zero, in which neither side makes any move at all for fear of indicating to the other that such a move is possible.

### Eppur Si Muovono

GAZING up at the American satellite balloon one night last week, seeing it drift, the wrong way by the standards of the sun and moon, across the sky like a first-magnitude star that had come loose from its moorings, I

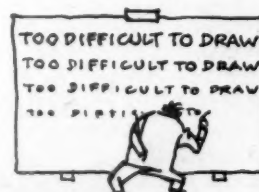


found myself hoping that some unforeseen snag would arise to this business of bouncing radio signals off it. If the process is a success, then every nation, not to say every telephone, broadcasting and television company, is going to put

a balloon up there as soon as it can lay hands on the necessary rocket. This is going to play hell with the navigation of ships and of people coming home late from parties. What's more, I suspect that it won't be long before they discover how to put advertisements on the things.

### Easier Money

"AND YOU'LL BE MINE . . ." sings the singer, "AND YOU'LL BE MINE . . . And you'll be mine . . . And you'll be mine . . ." The latest thing in pop arrangements is to get



stuck on a phrase and simply fade out, which saves headaches for the orchestrator and makes no demands on the artist in the way of delicate taperings to a *pianissimo*. I'm all for labour-saving of this kind, and hope that it will spread to my own sphere. Some of these paragraphs get PRETTY TRICKY TO END . . . PRETTY TRICKY TO END . . . Pretty tricky to end . . . Pretty tricky to end . . .

### Lifts

PROFESSOR LOVELL, director of the radio astronomy station at Jodrell Bank, has jerked his thumb at the Russians and asked for a lift. He wants them to put a small radio telescope





"I think it's a wonderful age to live in—no longer afraid of Russia, not quite afraid of China."

in one of their sputniks—a telescope capable of picking up low frequency waves from outer space. The Professor will probably get his lift, if only because he has been turned down by the Americans. Human nature. Last week I was accosted in a Surrey lane by a party of French students. They wanted (unless my French deceived me) to go in the opposite direction to the one in which my car was pointed. At last, thinking of Macmillan and his Common Market problems, I agreed to help them. I backed the car and prepared to turn. Meanwhile they waved down another (bigger and grander) car and clambered in.

#### *They've Always Been Good*

THE other Thursday a letter in *The Times* told with amusement the one about the bus-conductor who on being given farthings suggests that the next offering will be jam-jars (twenty-six years ago, an acquaintance of mine then helping to edit a London evening paper's "Cockney Humour" competition kept the score of this story: it came in on the average twenty times a day for fourteen weeks). On Friday the *Evening Standard's* "Londoner's Diary" quoted, in the bold type reserved for oddity, a shop-window notice saying

"English spoken. American understood." And on Saturday, the *Star* columnist Mr. Colin Frame gave every appearance of having only just heard from his pub landlord about the drunk's dog that said "No, thanks, I'm driving." It was quite a week for us elderly-joke-fanciers, let the hyphens fall where they may.

#### *The Picture of Hooligan Gray*

I WAS awfully interested to read about the Russian criminologist who said that in his country their method of curing hooligans was to take photographs of them while they were engaged in some hooliganistic pursuit, such as drunkenness, and show them the pictures next day so that they were so ashamed they resolved never to act hooliganistically again. I once tried this method in Battersea Park, but it was frightfully difficult to get the hooligans to stand still long enough; and when I did take some decent pictures, either I couldn't find the wretches next day or when I did they seized avidly on my photographs and asked if I could get them some extra prints.

#### *Play it Less Inscrutable*

WE may see an Oriental boom in kitchen-sink drama if a directive of the Chinese congress of writers and artists to all engaged in literature and art to "go deeper among the masses of

workers, peasants and soldiers, take part in productive labour and practical work" is obeyed. The old Chinese proverb about loaves and lilies will have to conform: "If you have two power-driven rice-flails, flog one and buy a jade bust of Mao Tse-tung." And the Kai Lung aphorisms will need a bit of revision: "Sweeter upon the shrine of our ancestors is the fragrance of the opium pipe than the imported Tibetan labourer's unauthorized mid-morning yak snack."

#### *Experto Crede*

A PART from do-it-yourself crafts, it gets harder and harder for the layman to stir a finger without specialist aid; "advice by centenary experts without obligation" is now offered to companies about to celebrate their hundredth anniversaries. I suppose this is the spread into industry of geriatrics, or growing old gracefully, but I don't see why the romance of Betta Bathplugs through the decades can't be presented effectively enough by a couple of bright backroom board boys and a copywriter without offering libations to the gods of gimmickry. Surely you can put over "Catsmeat to Caviar in Three Generations: A Cavalcade of Catering" without *Son et Lumière*.

#### *Then as Now*

JUST as the Cyprus chapter was closing I came across this song, a topical hit sung by Arthur Roberts in the music-halls towards the close of the last century, which seemed worth a moment's revival:

Here's another little baby Queen  
Victoria has got,  
Another little colony, although she has  
a lot,  
Another little island, very wet and very  
hot,  
Whatever will she do with little  
Cyprus?

... And if they're good we'll send a  
minor canon of St. Paul's  
To blow up all the wicked ones in  
Cyprus.

#### *What Do You Mean, Bygones?*

ONE of the attractions at the Boys' and Girls' Exhibition at Olympia is telling the customers "Pit your skill against the German Navy!"



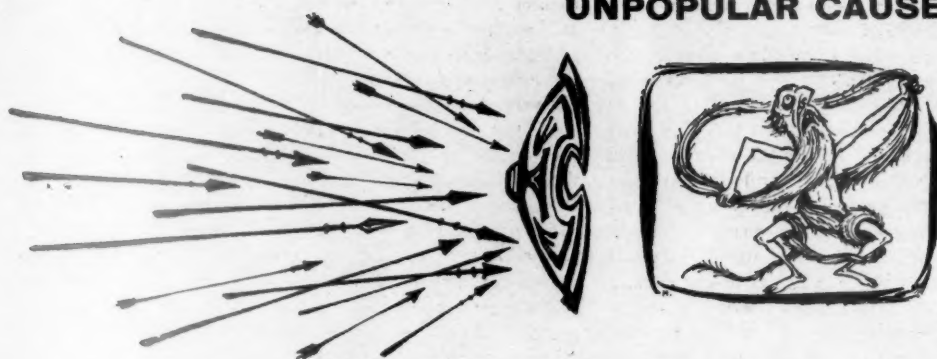
"Cut the imitations and get on with the job."





"TRY SIDEWAYS, MISSUS, TRY SIDEWAYS!"

## UNPOPULAR CAUSES


*In Defence of*  
**SENILITY**

by J. B. Morton

**S**ENILITY may be defined as that period of old age which is easily recognizable, by the young, as full-blown imbecility. The symptoms of this state of decrepitude, increasingly widespread among the old, are so unmistakable that any stripling of either sex can give a correct diagnosis at a moment's notice. Even in the early stages of the disease the patient stubbornly refuses to accept certain propositions which are self-evident to the young. He will, for instance, challenge and even ridicule the dogma of progress; that immutable law of nature by which everything improves all the time. At any mention of the word progress he will mutter, in his fatuous manner, "Progress towards what?" as though the word, by itself, were meaningless. He will assert that manners and morals have deteriorated in his lifetime, and is too bigoted and crabbed to derive any pleasure from the latest experiments in music and painting and poetry. This inability and unwillingness to salute the new springtime of the arts he attributes, superciliously, to what he calls the failure of composers, artists and poets to make themselves understood. The same incapacity for enthusiasm, accompanied by irrational prejudice, permits him to dismiss the adventurous trends in sculpture as ugly and meaningless, and blinds him to the beauty of the towering buildings which are touching our horizons with magic, and expressing eloquently the æsthetic creed of an age emancipated from tradition.

Between the wars there was an admirable phrase: Give Youth a Chance. To-day there is always some old dodderer ready with a cantankerous comment on that slogan. He will mutter that the young have been given too much of a chance. He will say "They are now freed from the scholastic and parental control which they found so repressive and irksome and humiliating. They can earn plenty of money and can no longer complain that they are treated as children. They are the idols of the entertainment and sporting worlds. They can indulge, with comparative immunity, their passion for those outbursts of hooliganism and worse which too many of

the lenient authorities regard as high spirits. Nobody attempts, for fear of the consequences, to exact from them either respect for their elders or toleration of opinions of which they disapprove. When they are rebuked, great care is taken not to injure their conceit, or warp their lives by turning them into what the psychologists called enemies of society—an enemy of society being any youngster who is told that he must not do whatever he pleases." The old foggy who talks like this is merely confessing that he is out of sympathy with certain manifestations of independence. Therefore he has forfeited all right to judge what is going on round him. He does not understand the problems of the young.

The young have not failed to notice that the tiresome stupidity associated with old age attacks many people earlier in life than ever before, rendering them completely unfitted to deal with their juniors. Many men who, in the mere matter of years, should be in the prime of life have all the mental attributes of senility. This is particularly noticeable in schoolmasters and parents. In the name of education schoolmasters act as though they have a mandate to interfere with the lives of their pupils. As self-appointed censors they continually express their disapproval of any conduct which infringes their narrow code. The result of this repression of the natural instincts of the young is exactly the opposite of what is intended. Psychologists and psychiatrists have proved that it produces an admirable rebelliousness in any healthy-minded lad. It is only the minority who have not the stamina for active resentment. Such weaklings are very justly despised and mocked by those who have too much character to submit to irrational rules which they had no hand in framing; rules drawn up by people who had neither the common sense nor the common courtesy to consult the victims. Calling their interdicts "discipline," the masters are so busy stifling the development of individual character that boys, forced to take matters into their own hands, are deafened by a well-organized chorus of disapprobation.

As to the parents, it cannot be denied that some of them show a faint understanding of their children. For instance, they will occasionally protest when a schoolmaster takes the law into his hands and canes a pupil for what he calls insubordination. Again, believing a son's story rather than that of a master and his witnesses, they will take the boy's side. But as a general rule parents leave the masters to do what they consider their duty. This indifference to the feeling of one solitary boy confronting the tyranny of the school authorities is hardly guaranteed to make for better relations between father and son. Such an attitude is based on an unquestioning belief in the "virtue" of obedience and in the outmoded catchwords "right" and "wrong," and is characteristic of the onset of senility, even if it be premature senility. A parent who demands obedience without argument is either afraid that argument will prove his stupidity or is relying on the unintelligence of an offspring cowed by the power of words. The great peril of curbing a youth's natural instinct for enjoying life in his own way is that he will grow into that meek, standardized type which meets with well-merited derision when he happens to be in the company of

hardier companions. He feels himself to be an outcast, and in due time will find his level among prigs and bores and pedants, from whom, before he is old in years, he will catch the infection of senility.

Every day the liveliness of the young is criticized, and is even interfered with by the police, with the result that, though they claim that they can do anything they like, they feel that there is nothing for them to do. Parents who have forgotten what love is question the wisdom of juvenile marriages with Victorian complacency. Many who have never been on a motor-bicycle write solemn letters to the papers, protesting against full-blooded boys being allowed to race at 100 miles an hour along the roads, and even complaining of the accompanying noise which is the signature tune of youth. The robust attitude to life which is stimulated by film and radio and television is condemned. The gay, light-hearted dances which so often end in a manly pugnacity are denounced by people who seem to think that an occasional minuet should satisfy the craving of the young for normal, healthy, excitement. As a popular figure, whose circle of friends is called a gang, has well said: "Occasionally there is violence, but



"Well, to begin with, it shocks you out of your complacency."



"Call the garage!"



what is the beating-up by a group of friends of a girl who has annoyed them but a kind of chivalry in modern dress?"

The senile often claim, to justify their spleen and their disapproval of the new generation, that their experience of life, of men and things, has equipped them to counsel, warn and even reprimand the young. They should be told that the experience they claim is the experience of *their* lives, and of men and things of *their* generation. Their standards are the standards of a bygone and discredited era; an era which disappeared in the laughter and scorn of their children and grandchildren. They will sometimes admit, rather pathetically and with a tolerant smile, that they, too, were young once, and indulged in foolish pranks, but that their parents kept those pranks within reasonable bounds. They will even boast of having suffered that last indignity of the young: a beating. As though corporal punishment ever achieved anything but resentment, or led to anything but a determination to exact revenge! When they talk like this the senile are merely proving that their natural impulses were stifled, their longing for self-expression was curbed. Their relation to their parents was one of servitude, which they, in their priggish fashion, call obedience.

Not long ago a grandfather ventured to suggest, pedantically enough, that the so-called discontent and rebelliousness of youth were due to the loss of religion. At the word religion the youngster he was talking to smiled compassionately. He explained that his hard-headed generation had done with superstition. "I suppose," said the aged man, "that you and your friends rightly regard superstition as an unnatural belief in some claim which there is no evidence to support?" "That's about it," said the young man. "Therefore," said the grandfather, "you do not believe what the advertisements tell you. Doubtless you have observed that there is no sale for the thousands of pills, drugs and patent medicines which even athletes are implored to take; that the foods, cigarettes, soaps and all the other articles presented so imaginatively are ignored. And, of course, it is your hard-headedness which has made sham psychologists and quack dieticians so unpopular, and almost driven the astrologers from the newspapers." To which the youngster replied "You talk too much."

It is often said by the senile that the new approach to life of the younger generation is due to the influence of mass-entertainment. Films and television are blamed for their influence on the young, and whenever the newspapers report anything which illustrates a certain sort of exuberance some aged hermit is sure to lead an irate correspondence column against the depravity of this or that film or television feature.

Nobody of a previous generation seems to realize that it is the young who have forced an uncompromising, bold realism on the purveyors of entertainment. It is they who are responsible for the broader outlook which reflects the more uninhibited aspects of life to-day. If sadism, normal torture and promiscuity recur on the screen it is because they recur in the modern world—but stripped of the mysterious terror once attached to those words. It is due to the open-minded honesty of the young that any subject may now be discussed in public, and in language which the hypocritical still regard as indecent. What is the restraint urged by the senile but a disgruntled frustration, an austerity-complex?

When once it is agreed that the old, using the word in its correct modern sense to denote senility or second childhood, are not competent to express opinions on the young, save when those opinions are favourable enough to show an understanding—when once this is agreed, they should be encouraged to retire into their own bizarre world. There they can enjoy what they regard as the advantages of their pitiful isolation from life. They need not learn American. They can dress eccentrically without causing comment, laugh at the old-fashioned jokes, and prophesy doom to their hearts' content. They can also, in their own quiet way, derive amusement from what goes on around them. Said a merry old fellow the other day, "Any day at the seaside you may see thousands of the independent-minded young thinking for themselves, their tongues hanging out to lick curious sweetmeats. Thank God the senile can still keep their tongues in their cheeks."

Next week: **In Defence of Stagnation,**  
by Dennis Potter

# When I Investigated Katanga

By CLAUD COCKBURN

NOT everyone, I dare say, reading of the Congo and Mr. Tshombe and the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga*, at once thinks of churches and stained glass. I do. And the reason for that is that on the only occasion when I went to see the bosses of that almighty Haut Katanga firm I saw something—right there in the heart of Brussels—which I never thought to see.

What they had was an office with a device of double windows all around it. The outside windows were of more or less ordinary glass, but the inner windows were of stained glass, depicting saintly legend and story. Between the two layers there were high-powered electric lightings. So that while you waited in this place to ask the chiefs of the U.M.H.K. why they went on the way they did you had the impression all the time that you were in some sort of church or chapel. You gently, under the illuminated influence of those windows, dismissed from your mind raw, brash and sordid thoughts. You thought about all things bright and beautiful and the early Christian martyrs and you felt that probably the Directors of the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* were in about the same bracket with those saints and martyrs of old.

The time I sat there I was in the company of Mr. Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, then managing editor of a magazine called *Fortune* which, according to its advertising copy, was the magazine of the "50,000 richest people in America."

And what we were there for was to "lay bare" the "inner workings" of the U.M.H.K. The notion at that time was that these fellows had somehow hogged—or were about to hog—the world radium supply. (This was before every hitch-hiker had a Geiger counter and sought uranium.) It is an odd fact about the Haut Katanga firm that from time to time it causes thoughtful journalists and investigators all over the world to start by wondering what the devil it is up to and to go on by imagining that it is, just possibly, up to no great good.

The same thing happens from time

to time to the firm of Krupp. No reason for it—probably just an old family curse.

So, the day before, this man Ingersoll and myself had been sitting in the American Bar of the Savoy Hotel, London, and he was explaining to me—I was a correspondent of his magazine at the time—that what we needed to do was to dash over to Brussels and lay bare the Haut Katanga. Ingersoll had a suitably sensational mind and he believed the tentacles—a phrase he

happened to employ—of the Haut Katanga were everywhere. "Even here," he said, and gave a sharp, richest-American look at a man at the next table who seemed to be showing interest in our conversation.

Without moving any part of him but his eyes, Ingersoll actually said to this man "Do you have some interest in our conversation, sir?" The man shook his head and put his lips into his liquor and waddled away.

Ingersoll told me two things about



"Oh yes—and a beware-of-the-dog notice."

our mission. The first was that the only time to see really top-flight Belgian business men was between the hours of three in the afternoon and five in the afternoon.

The reason? Because, so Ingersoll had been most credibly informed, until 3 p.m. the high-income-bracket Belgians are still getting over their hangovers. After 5 p.m. they are drunk. (I have no wish to asperse rich Belgians as such—I am simply repeating what this American editor told me.)

The other thing was that we had, at all costs, to get to see this fellow Schneider—or a name to that effect. He was the inside-top-man of the

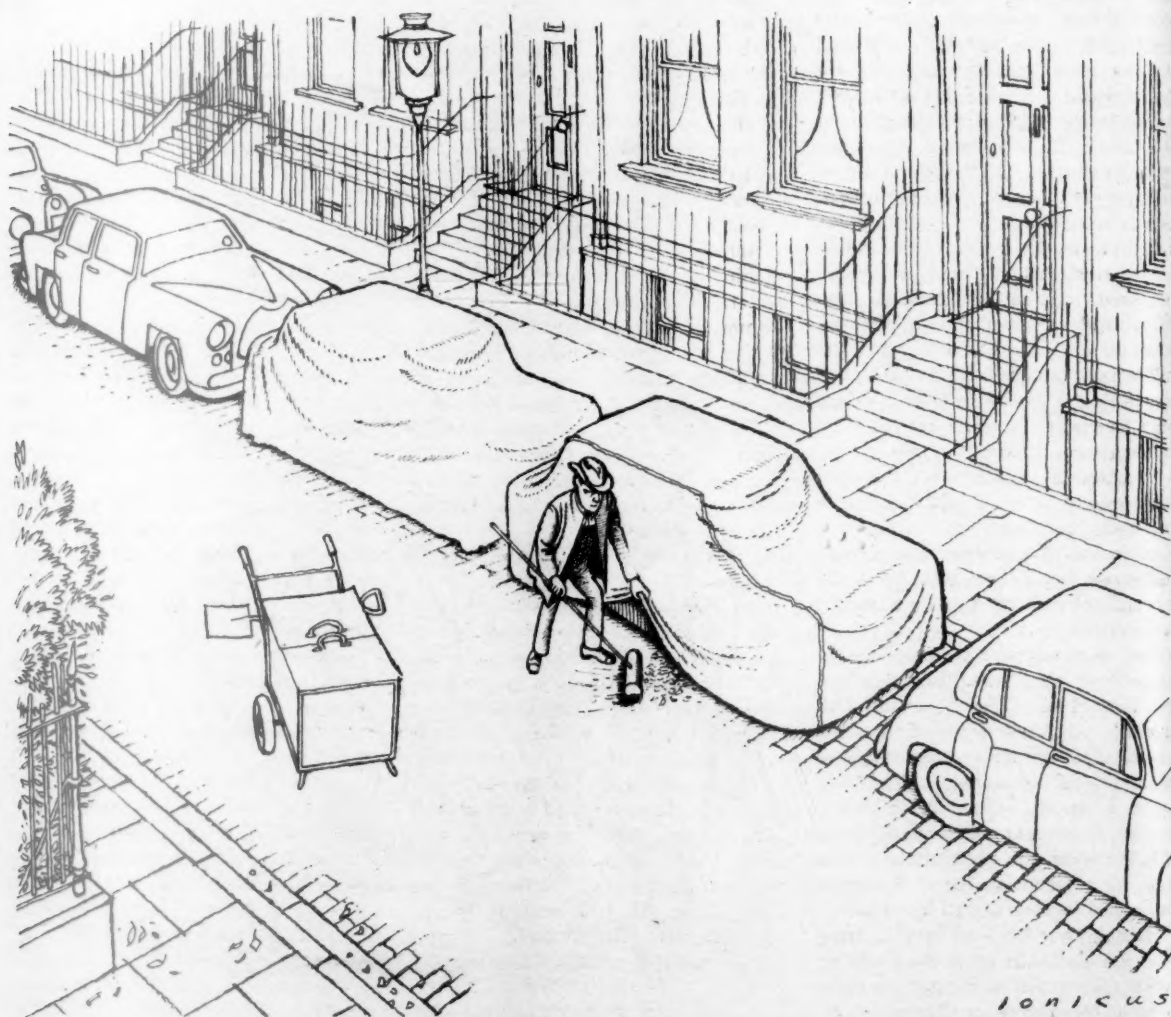
Haut Katanga and Ingersoll knew a man who knew some men who knew Schneider, and when we got to Schneider we were going to be right in.

Time was moving along, and almost before we could order another drink it became apparent that were we to reach Brussels during the effective working period we had to hire an aeroplane to get us there. The ordinary scheduled flights were going to land us so late there would be nothing to investigate but a boozing party.

It is very nice indeed to sit in the American Bar of the Savoy Hotel and crook your finger at a man and request him to lay on a private aircraft and put

the expense down to Mr. Henry Luce, owner of *Fortune* magazine. This we accordingly did. And in a brief space of time we were cloistered—a *mot juste* if ever I saw one—in this inner chapel of the Haut Katanga concern, into which fell not vulgar daylight but neon beams, filtered beneficently through ecclesiastical panes.

There was one false note—or a note, if not false, yet menacing: namely, an electric clock. And at the time we entered the clock—despite the costly speed of our chartered plane—marked already the moment of thirty-one minutes past four. Ingersoll kept eyeing the clock with apprehension and asking





an acolyte who sat at a decent distance—either telling his beads or totting up his holdings in Congolese properties—when we could hope to see M. Schneider.

I, for my part, mildly jeered at Ingersoll. I indicated clearly enough that I took not much stock in whatever his friends and associates in New York had told him about the habits of Belgian big-business men.

Indeed I was still so doing when the hands of the clock reached and barely passed the hour of five. At that moment two separate doors of the chapel burst open and out of one came four, out of another three, men who—had you met them in Toronto or Bournemouth—you would have immediately recognized as Belgian big-business men. They walked—the group of three and the group of four—arm in arm. They were jovial. They were making a good deal of noise. And as they reeled past us, shouting and humming, I had to admit that they were, without question, drunk as lords.

Ingersoll gave me a look of restrained triumph, disentangled his serpentine legs, and said "You see? We'll have to wait till to-morrow."

After that airborne dash it was at first hard to adjust oneself to the idea that we had absolutely nothing purposeful to do in Brussels until 3.1 p.m. the following afternoon. (For after this first experience I accepted unquestioningly Ingersoll's corollary statement to the effect that a visitor coming upon—say—Schneider before three o'clock would encounter something like a bear with a sore head.)

As it was, Ingersoll's own nervous restlessness nearly got us into trouble after all. For on the following day we had finished lunch early—to be sure of getting to the Haut Katanga office on the stroke of three—and then found we had three quarters of an hour in hand. Ingersoll was determined to employ this interval in driving about Brussels, seeing as many monuments and other sights of historical interest as possible, in a one-horse *fiacre* of the kind which at that time was stationed here and there in the city for the convenience of tourists with a penchant for the Old World.

Perhaps because Ingersoll—a large man—squirmed so, or perhaps simply under the impulse of our nervous tensions, somewhere in the inner suburbs first the *fiacre*, then the driver,



"She's nearly human, you know."

then the very horse itself began to go to pieces. A wheel loosened, the driver became wild in manner, and the horse sank to its knees. We had literally to run nearly half a mile to reach the shrine by 4.45.

The acolyte showed us immediately into an inner office. Ingersoll, with his perfect faith in the timing of the operation, had no doubt that the high official who there received us was neither hung-over nor drunk. My opinion was that he might have been either. Ingersoll was also under the impression that this must be the M. Schneider for whom we had so repeatedly asked.

Between sorely knitted brows and heavy pouches, the man's eyes narrowed meanly. He did not care to have this American editor insisting that he was M. Schneider. His name, it seemed, was quite otherwise.

"Where then," we asked, "is M. Schneider?"

At this stage I need hardly tell you that we were informed that M. Schneider had been residing some days at the Savoy Hotel, London. If we chartered a plane immediately we might just reach him there before he left for Leopoldville.

We did so. We reached the Savoy. In time. In time—again it is almost too agonizing to recount—to introduce ourselves to M. Schneider who was the man to whom, only thirty-six or so hours earlier, we had been so rude in the American Bar because he had seemed to show an impertinent interest in the conversation of two journalists laying plans to lay bare the secrets of the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga*.

## Wish You Were Here

Vence, A.M.

**G**LAD to be back from the coast, with which, after twenty-one years' absence, we are horrified. Speculators must have grown fat on the ruin of the Riviera. Crushing blocks of elephantine flats, and whole beaches turned into a slum of hot-doggery.

But this little town, self-contained at a thousand feet, is still itself. For the first time in France we have a flat; one window looks down to Antibes, the other to Nice. We look after ourselves, doing the round every morning with string bags of very sociable shops stuffed with gossip and marvellous raw materials. Between us we've mastered *ratatouille* and *aioli*. To be on the safe side I make my *aioli* so strong I'm told I leave a wake like a Marseilles fisherman's.

Cagnes beach is a quarter of an hour's corkscrew drive away. In the evenings we explore the hill villages behind us. Fortified mostly, and still unspoiled. In Gattières, some way back, we've found a heartening joint run by Monsieur Possemeux, whose father installed a spit, turning over a vine-twist fire, that is still working to the customers' advantage.

At night fascinated by the fireflies. They behave like miniature airliners, with busy little lamps in their tails that go on, off, on, off. If this is sexual attraction it's nature's gayest manifestation.

— E.O.D.K.

## Small-time Stuff at Rome

By H. F. ELLIS

THE extraordinary size and scope of the Games about to be held in Rome are freely commented upon: the splendour of the arenas, halls and pools; the vast number of competitors; the diversity of the sports and games (including, for instance, clay-pigeon shooting) at which the nations will struggle for pre-eminence; the complication of the arrangements for ordering this titanic festival. Some say that the Olympic Games have now got out of hand, and should be trimmed and pruned down to a more manageable size.

All this fuss would have caused laughter in Rome when Plancus was consul, or a little later. The city was no stranger to games in those days, and had its standards. If somebody had sprinted up to Nero and told him, with a wealth of excited gesture, that a new

arena had just been built capable of holding 100,000 spectators and that no fewer than three hundred competitors were coming from Britain alone, the Emperor would have had the man torn to pieces by panthers. And rightly. It is true that the Colosseum held only about 87,000 on a full night, but the Circus Maximus, according to Dionysius the Rhetorician, could accommodate 150,000, and Pliny the Elder (writing a little later, when improvements had no doubt been effected) puts the figure at 260,000\*. As to the number of competitors in those more spacious days, is it realized that more than 10,000 gladiators took the field at the games to celebrate Trajan's victory over the Dacians, and that teams of 19,000 a side played in

\*A still later writer mentions a crowd of 385,000 in the Circus, but he doesn't say whether they were comfortable. It seems a lot.

the *Naumachia* arranged by Claudius on Lake Fucinus? It is ludicrous to talk about complicated arrangements for feeding and housing a few hundred pole-vaulters, weight-lifters, swimmers and hockey players in a city that thought nothing of assembling thirty-eight thousand competitors, mostly captives and criminals, for a single event. All these gladiators and *Naumachiarii* had to be catered for, before the Games if not after.

It is odd that the modern Romans, bemused perhaps by the tag "Olympic" and its inhibiting associations with Greek moderation, seem to have made no attempt to revive some of the pomp and splendour of their own Games (the *Ludi Saeculares*, for instance) on this occasion. There was a time when they would have been ill content to launch an important meeting of this kind with



"And do be careful what you drink, dear."

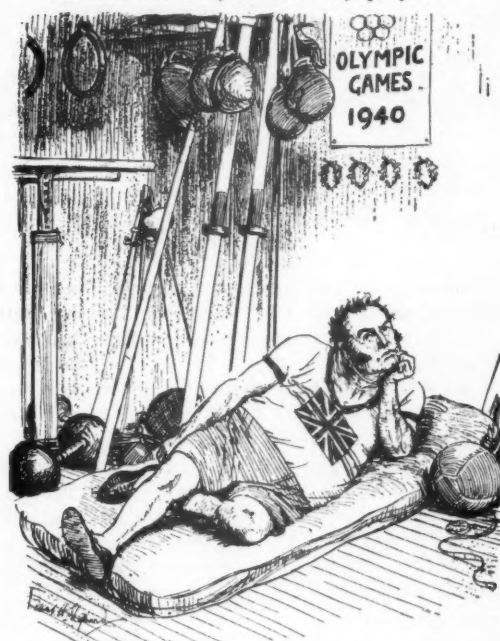
the arrival of an imported torch, a little mild oath-taking, and the release of a few hundred doves. There would have been riots. "Where," they would have cried, "is the customary wheat, barley and beans? What has become of the public distribution, on the Capitol and Palatine hills, of torches, sulphur and bitumen, wherewith the citizens are wont to purify themselves? Why are there no dramatic representations, no singing of supplicatory hymns by the noblest matrons in town, no sacrifices to Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, Minerva, Venus, Apollo, Mercury, Ceres, Vulcan, Mars, Diana, Vesta, Hercules, Latona, the Parcae, Dis and Proserpina, in that order?" Even those miserable doves, some Clodius or Catiline would have pointed out, were to be set free instead of being slaughtered in the proper way.

One can see, of course, that the revival of the Roman Games in their entirety is not now a practical proposition. A programme that included *cursus*, *pugna equestris*, *venatio*, *naumachia* and *certamen gymnicum*—in other words, chariot races, mounted battles, exhibitions of wild beasts, sea fights and athletics—would be too broad for modern tastes. We may rightly congratulate ourselves that we no longer care to witness the wholesale slaughter, whether of men or animals, that delighted the Romans of later Republican and Imperial times. But we ought not, I think, to make quite such a to-do about the difficulty of putting on the modern Olympic Games. How would the present Organizing Committee in Rome care to make arrangements for the reception and management of the eleven thousand wild animals exhibited at those games of Trajan's to which I have earlier referred, not forgetting that they would already have ten thousand gladiators on their hands plus a sea-fight or two in all probability—and shall we say 300,000 expected in the arena on the opening day? The collection, transport, stabling and feeding of the entries for a good *venatio* must have taxed even the ancient Romans. One has only to think of the special diets required by the elephants, elks, tigers, lions, leopards, hyaenas, camelopards,

\* I do not know, to be honest, how this was done. It may be that, with the invention of soap-cakes, the secret was lost.

## THEN . . .

1936 was not one of our better Olympic years.



John Bull. "AND NOW I SUPPOSE I CAN GO TO SLEEP FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS." August 26, 1936

onagers and "an immense number of other animals" (including a rhinoceros, a hippopotamus and ten unidentified "archoleontes") exhibited by the Emperor Philippus at the last of the Ludi Saeculares in A.D. 248 to realize that catering for the individual tastes of a Pirie, a Ponomaryova, a Gardner, a Milkha Singh, an Ericsson, a Sime, a Konrads, a Krzyskowiak, a Claus, a Bignal, an Elliott, a Razik, a Schmidt, a Szecsenyi, a Connolly, a Seye and a far from immense number of other competitors (including basketball players, weight-lifters and clay-pigeon shooters) is child's play by comparison.

I do not mean to imply that the great inaugural Parade on August 25th will be anything but impressive. But I do say that it must take second place to the *Pompa Circensis* of Rome's great days. A massed march-past of women discus throwers from Czechoslovakia is well enough in its way; it cannot have quite the panache of, let us say, the 1,000 ostriches put on by the Emperor

Probus. The prospect of catching a glimpse of Mr. Ralph Boston, from Tennessee, who so recently broke Jesse Owens' world record by jumping 26 ft. 11½ in., will rightly excite the crowds; Mr. Boston himself would hardly claim to have the universal appeal of the snake fifty cubits in length exhibited, together with thirty-six crocodiles, by Augustus in the games of 29 B.C.

Still, there it is. The old bad days are over and nothing like a *venatio* or even a *naumachia* will disgrace the Games of 1960. The one old event I should really like to see revived is the *cursus*, for there is nothing, as any film-goer knows, to beat a good chariot-race. I do not feel that it need be any more dangerous for the horses than, say, the Grand National, nor for men than any Grand Prix. In particular, I should like to see what happens when the two outside horses of a *quadriga* have been doped to run faster, and the two inside ones doped to run slower. That *would* make a Roman holiday.



# Baths, Ancient and Modern

By CATHERINE DRINKWATER

*A side-glance, between the Games, at other Roman phenomena, including landladies*

I ONLY went to the Baths of Caracalla once. It was during the summer opera season and they were doing *Aida* in best Roman style. Three hundred singers, soldiers, and slaves, thirty-seven horses, two fully grown elephants and a sprinkling of cats. In the case of the cats they had no choice; lean and desperate like their mates from the Forum they lived in the baths all the year round taking the opera in their stride. During the aria three of them walked in stately file across the battlements. Improvised gesture though it was, there was more than a touch of ancient Egypt about them as they stood silhouetted against the sky-line. It was as epic. Every seat was double price. Yet careless of culture I could only sit and wonder if the place was still piped for running water. All things considered it looked in pretty good nick and by the time they'd got *Aida* sealed up in the cellar I'd worked out that even with eight hundred baths fitted up they'd still have room for a game of polo. Yet

there was I forced to queue twice a week in Corso Umberto with my soap and towel under my arm for five hundred lire worth of tepid water, and that only stayed in providing you kept your foot on the plug.

The irony of it was appalling. Two thousand years back I could have nipped into Diocletian's palace and made a day of it. Every taste catered for; the gregarious, the solitary, the briskly hygienic or the sensuous layabout. Thirty acres jammed with baths and there was I in the age of the common man furtively washing my feet in a fountain. There are those to whom a bath means no more than a cake of soap and a loafah. No sooner in than out, their minds busy with mighty thought. Given a cup of tea, a plate of sandwiches and the latest Michael Gilbert I count it no hardship to stay in till my fingers turn wrinkly. It's a cut price psychotherapy and without it my nerves turn sour on me. By the time I reached Rome they were jangling. In Sicily I had made do with what looked like a



prop from a Hollywood epic; one of those big wooden tubs from which the heroine raises a seductive shoulder. It was like crouching at the bottom of an evil-smelling lift-shaft with a jug or two of water lapping about one's ankles. After the first two days I took to carrying a cake of soap in my pocket and getting a quick lather where I could. Fountains, horse troughs or mountain pools, they served the same purpose; let loose in Villa D'Este with half a pound of yellow soap I would have gone berserk.

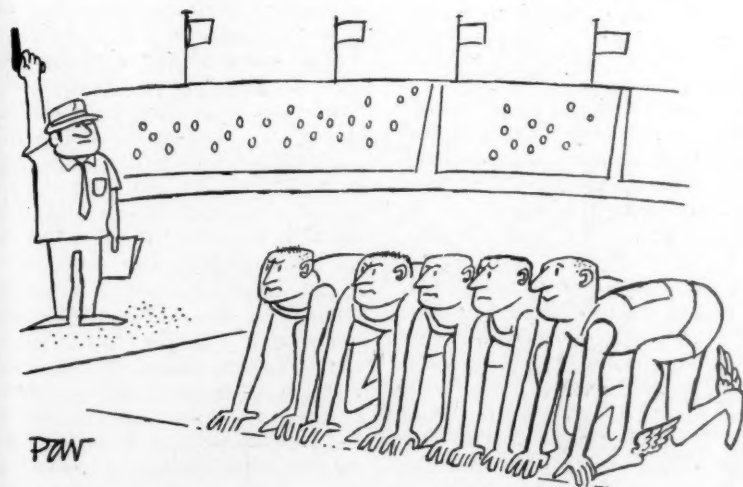
So I came to Rome and the first of a long line of landladies. Roman landladies fall into two distinct groups; the sort everyone gets, and mine. I am the only person I know to have a landlady hang an outsize padlock from the telephone dial every time she went out and I stayed in. I also got the one on the run from the Mafia. It was over twenty years since they'd put her on the books but she wasn't taking chances. The front door was done up like something out of a speak-easy and even when she let anyone in she was apt to succumb to sudden suspicions; one in five gas collectors got shown into the coat cupboard and locked there till sufficient marks of identity were pushed



under the door. On two occasions when, late at night, I was making my way across the hall in my duffel coat and toreadors, a sheet was thrown over my head and tied in a cunning tourniquet at the throat. But that first landlady was in a class apart. Signora Clark-Cechinni was a peerless hostess whose grandfather hailed from Worthing. She spoke no English but the Saxon strain was clear. There were chintz-covered arm-chairs in the *salotto* and beside the small fishpond on the balcony stood a cheery garden gnome. Tea was served at four and a three-course breakfast at eight, while genuine visitors Inglese were treated like crowned heads; hot-water bottles from October, brown bread, and kippers twice a week. Yet even amid such perfections lurked a flaw. Signora Clark-Cechinni was a female Phileas Fogg. Time ruled her house and her life. Not only were we expected to glide in and out on the minute but the whole house pulsated like some vast unexploded bomb with the frenzied ticking of fifty-two clocks. It was bad enough having six cuckoo clocks on a very narrow landing. Not that they uttered a warning note between them, they simply whipped out, some on the hour, some on the quarter, for a lethal belt at any passing ear, then in again, silent and malevolent. But from every holiday she took there came another clock. Now I shared a bathroom with three other people who

were tolerant enough of my slothful habits. But the Phileas Fogg in the signora wanted me out of that bath on the dot. After her annual fortnight at Worthing she brought back the usual souvenir. It was a shining copper warming pan inscribed "In Memory of Olde Tymes." The clock was in the top and the handle swung to and fro like a gently moving metronome. She was a precise woman. Her home was a poem of symmetry and the clock was hung in the bathroom directly above the hot and cold taps. Hot to cold, cold to hot, it swung, day and night, never a millimetre out, never a second fast or

slow. Its tick was deep and sonorous as befits a clock with olde English lettering and it drove me raving mad. I tried sitting with my back to the taps, wearing dark glasses, ear plugs, practising mind over matter. I tried taking it down but it was as immovable as its owner. Week after week I lay there getting Wimbledon eyes while my whole nervous system twanged with discord. Never a discordant note passed between the signora and myself. The word bath was never uttered. Yet within the month I was dutifully queueing in the Corso, paying for three baths in one, and wondering if the Machiavelli of Florence hadn't rather swamped the Clarks of Worthing in the signora's family tree.



☆

#### Is Your Journey Really Necessary?

"British women's teams have a fine overall record in international matches, but we tend to . . .

Miss Signal seems capable of finishing in the first three, but one cannot say . . . and Mrs. P. E. M. Perkins are all experienced, though lacking the . . .

British runners could take the bronze medal with an inspired performance, but statistically they are not . . .

The British sprinters are unlikely to survive . . . clear of the rest. But a place for Britain in the final six would be unexpected . . .

Miss S. Platt might come through with a surprise in the javelin, but any further hopes . . ."—*The Times*



"That Brian Hewson's a nice-looking boy."

## Teacup Event

By LEONARD HILL

WHEN people mention the 1960 Rome Olympiad I murmur "However good they are, they won't come up to our performance in the 1948 Olympic Games in England."

"Really, were you in them?"

"Yes," I answer, modestly glancing towards my fallen arches, "actually I was." And I make sure I move away before they ask me what it was I did.

In 1948 I was an undergraduate at Cambridge. It was only recently, ten years after I had come down, that I discovered what Fenners was, and to this moment I have no idea where it is in Cambridge. The Hawks Club I always assumed had to do with hawking till someone told me otherwise.

My part in ensuring the great success of the Olympics in England was of a more domestic character than actually competing. No doubt I *could* have carried the torch into Wembley Stadium if I had bothered to ask for the job, but

at that moment I was rather busy serving cups of tea. I was a counter hand at the Olympic Village among the deer in Richmond Park. I was there from choice, you understand. I could have been on a tea stand at Wembley if I'd liked, but Richmond, with the open air, and the park, appealed to me. My counter was, I still believe, the most important of those that offered tea in all the Olympic tea places. I ran the bar in the staff canteen that served tea to all the non-playing participants in the Games. It was a delightful counter, made of some plastic material (no expense was spared), and I stood behind it wielding a teapot with such ease that I have never ceased to be critical of the women who do the same job in London cafeterias. If I were to leap over the hotplates and grills, dripping with tea from overflowing cups, I could show those girls a thing or two about pouring. And I am not just boasting. When you

come to think of it, there must be a lot of people behind the scenes to keep the athletes up to pitch, ready to toss the ball and run the race when their moment came. In a way I like to think that I contributed to the success of those chaps who stood on the top podium crowned with laurels after they had won their event; for I made tea for the girls who made the beds that made sleep possible for all these young men to leap and throw their way to victory. So my counter had its points, you might say, even if there were no actual laurel crowns for me.

Students gathered in the Richmond camp from all over the world. One day in the Sauna Bath we counted fifteen nationalities all beating each other on the back with twigs, and not one of them was an athlete; we were all back room boys and girls. After a Sauna Bath I was hardly fit to lift a teapot, so I sometimes suspected that installing these baths was just a ploy on the part of the Finns to ensure that no one else was fit for anything. That is by the way, for we didn't have Sauna Baths every day, but I wonder what extra ordeals the Finns arranged for their visitors when the Olympics were held in Finland. Perhaps Sauna Baths were obligatory there, which may explain a lot about the British performance that year.

I had a very exacting job, I consider. There were two shifts in the canteen; one from six in the morning till two in the afternoon, and the other from two till ten at night. So you can imagine lots of cups were poured during that time. On several occasions when I was feeling very heroic, and when the good name of England was at stake, I worked through two consecutive shifts, and no one mentioned the top podium for me. There were other things to do besides pouring tea, naturally; I used to sell cakes wrapped in Cellophane paper, and once when the chef did not turn up I cooked two hundred fried eggs for breakfast without turning a hair, much less breaking a yolk. I also set up a sort of communication centre for the back-room boys and girls, passing on messages and repeating the scandals of the camp to incredulous listeners. I did much to cement international relations over that brown tin teapot. When we had knocked off work for the day the students used to dance till the early hours of the morning, and walking



back to the counter through the dewy grasslands of Richmond Park was, in its own way, as rewarding as running the hundred metres or putting the shot for England.

Every little thing helps on these occasions, and my ready smile and teapot must have been a bigger boost to morale when England was losing than is generally realized. I also played my full part in camp politics. Once I told the colonel in charge of the camp that unless the students with the teapots got the same rate of pay as the student porters we would walk out on him. He realized, stout fellow, how much the future success of the Games lay in the tealeaves, and we got our ten bob a week rise; I often think it is a pity I did not continue in a career of worker-management relations.

It was a remarkably free and easy life behind the scenes in those green days. Occasionally on our strolls, we came across an athlete in track suit limbering up, and we would nod approval of his efforts as we passed.

We saw nothing of the Games, even on television, and for the most part went on with our tea-mashing and washing up. In large organizations everyone must play his part, however humble, and we were the unseen cogs of the machine.

After ten weeks of this inconspicuous stewardship we bade farewell to Georg, Ingrid, Greta and the rest; they may not have known much about British athletics but at least they had learned to appreciate a good cup of tea.

Needless to say, I have not touched a drop since, but as my contribution to British success in 1960, I have considered offering my services in my former capacity. I think I can just fit in the next two weeks. There is no point in building Olympic villages and new roads leading out of Rome, unless morale is kept piping hot. That is where I might come in with my teapot. Perhaps this year I should be promoted to serving the athletes instead of the domestic staff. One step nearer the top podium. And when the bands run through the national anthems of the nations and come to *God Save the Queen* I can lift my teapot high in the air as an offering to the success of Olympiad 1960. This year, I might even watch one or two of the events!

## Cryptolympiad

*"One gains the impressions that spying has become . . . carried on often for the sheer love of the game."*—Letter in the *Sunday Times*

HERE we come with our cloaks  
and daggers,  
Our furtive and dark demeanour,  
To bring you a sport of a brand-new  
sort  
To play in the Roman arena.

Microphones lurk in our track-suit  
pockets;  
Our badges are all in code;  
And the eerie twitters of midget  
transmitters  
Sound our Olympic ode.

We're after the records of Mata  
Hari;  
We'll better the figures of Fuchs;

What Dr. Nunn-May did will seem  
pretty faded  
When our form gets on to the books.

Our life's a thrilling great obstacle race  
When we live the wrong side of the  
fence,  
And we don't make a fuss if for people  
like us  
The trials succeed the events.

For it's not for the sake of a purloined  
note

Or posthumous newspaper fame  
That we put on the guise of notorious  
spies—

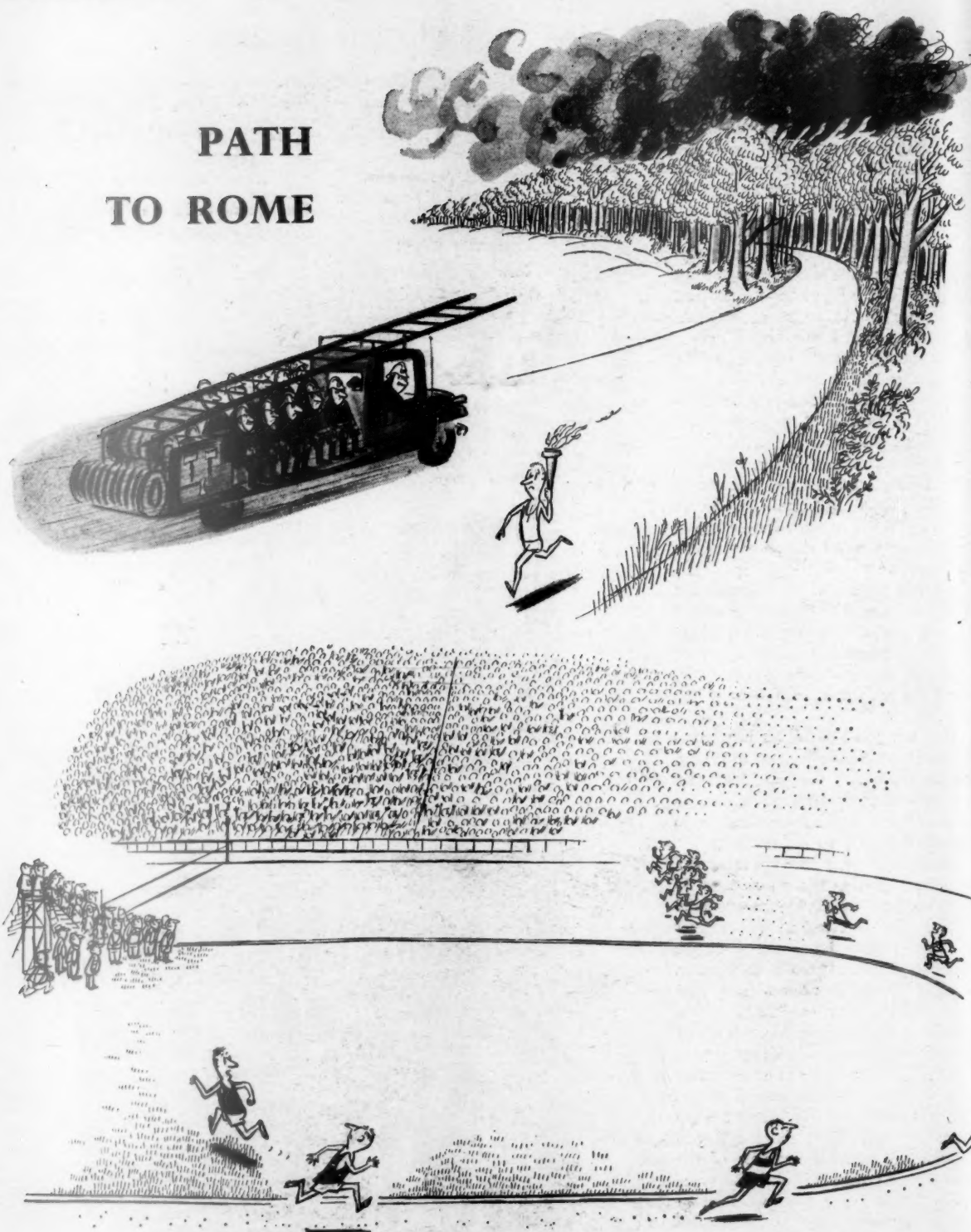
It's all for the love of the game!

— B. A. YOUNG

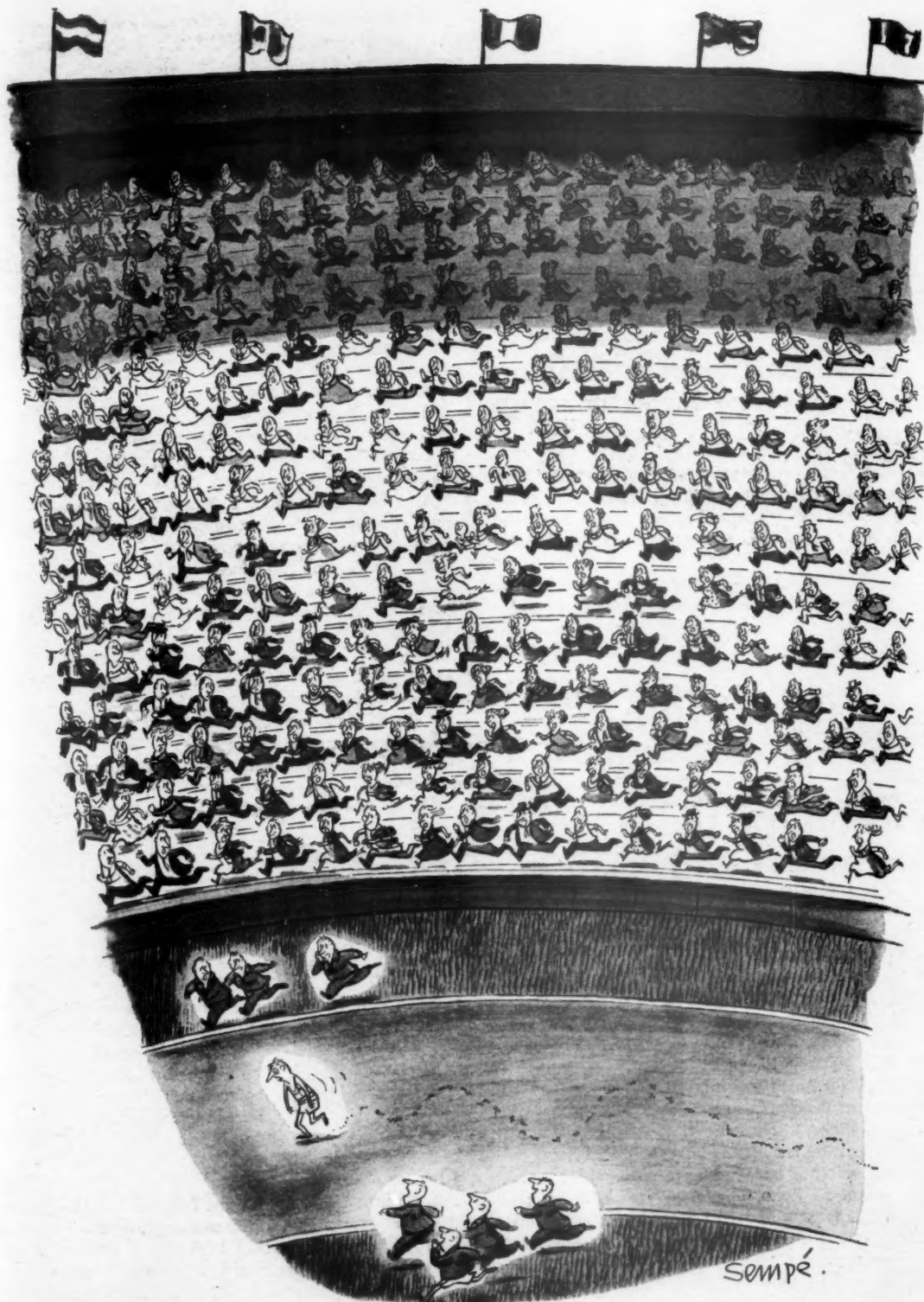
*"And after all that publicity  
about it being a sell-out!"*



## PATH TO ROME



"I want to see the finish."





# Odd Jobs

## 1. A Man with a Mission

By CLEMENT FREUD

IN 1951 the Volare agency for Great Britain was acquired by a passing acquaintance of mine, Signor Ferdinando Estrada, a dealer in wines and spirits whose trade was mainly with the sort of club that catered chiefly for non-members.

Estrada asked me to lunch with him at the Savoy, and we arranged to meet in the bar. He shook my hand, spoke to me in French, Italian and English, asked after my wife and family, told me about his and led me to a small bar table before giving my hand back to me.

"Order two Volares and soda," he whispered to me as we sat down.

"Two what?"

"Volare and soda." The bar waiter was approaching.

I ordered.

"Two what?" said the waiter.

"Two Volare and soda," I repeated.

The bar waiter left our table and a moment later the head barman appeared. I repeated my order, he repeated his "Two what?" and Estrada with a grand gesture said "Come, amigo, we go somewhere good, somewhere they gotta the Volare." He turned to the barman. "Please to tell Signor Luigi," he said, "that Mr. Estrada is notta wanting his table for lunch and is notta wanting either the champagne he was going to order." He left, magnificently, and I ran after him.

Some twenty minutes later we were sitting in a small, pleasant restaurant in Soho, sipping Volare with ice and lemon and soda. It was red and bitter, and tasted like embalming fluid to which a touch of quinine had been added as an afterthought.

"Is nice, eh?" said Estrada. The words form a question, but the expression turned them into a statement.

"Is nice," I said. He ordered two more.

After lunch, over a glass of Lassata del Cuneo, a liqueur which he also represented and which tasted like a poor man's egg flip, he outlined his proposition.

Estrada had the sole agency for Volare in this country. It was a drink that he and his father before him had rated most high among apéritifs in their native Milano. Somehow, British Railways had accepted a case, and there were now two bottles in the buffets at Euston, Victoria, Liverpool Street, Charing Cross, Waterloo and King's Cross. My job would be to make sure that the initial dozen sold, so that they would order some more.

"How would I go about it?" I asked.

"Is easy," said Estrada. "They don't know you, you go in, you look at the bottles, then you say: 'Ah, you have Volare, the popular Italian apéritif, please to give me a double with ice and lemon and soda'; then you buy a Volare for the barman, then perhaps for another customer and in a month or two everyone is drinking Volare!"

"With ice and lemon and soda," I said.

"You gotta the idea, you starta to-morrow."

I wore my demob suit, which I felt was the right thing for the buffets of our great termini, and the next morning found me in the Golden Arrow bar at Victoria. The queue was three deep, but I finally got to the counter where one harassed barman was trying to cope with the rush.

"Ah, good morning," I began pleasantly, having had my eye on the unopened bottle of Volare for some time now. "I see you stock Volare, the popular Italian apéritif."

The barman looked blank.

"Top shelf," I said, "right-hand side between Bramble gin and alcoholic clove cordial." It was undoubtedly a shelf reserved for slow sellers.

He looked at me incredulously. "You want that?"

I knew how he felt.

"A large one, please, with ice and lemon and soda. Have one yourself?"

"Thanks, I'll have a light ale."

It was no good trying to interest anyone else in Volare; they were too close for casual conversation. I fought my way out of the crush to a small table. I took a sip.

A watchful angel announced "The train now leaving platform six is the . . ." and I jumped up and knocked over my glass. To the approaching waitress I explained that the drink she was now mopping up was Volare, the popular Italian apéritif, that it was best drunk with ice and lemon and soda; I gave her 6d. It was only a little thing, but I

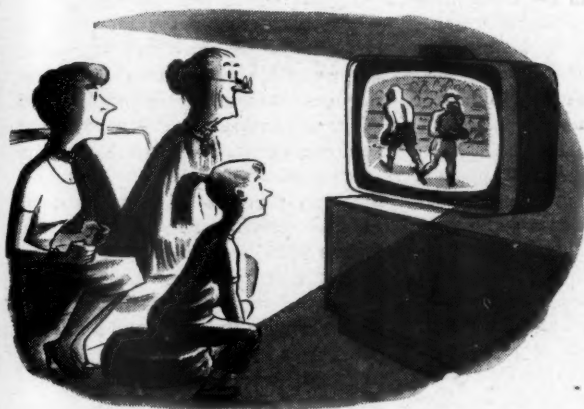
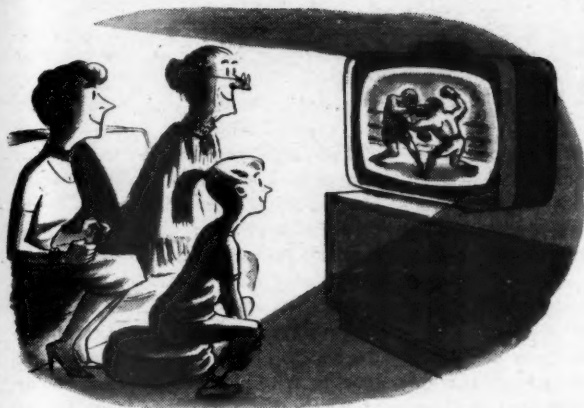
felt I had made my mark.

I left for Euston.

For the next weeks my routine followed a regular pattern. A Volare at each station in the mornings, now and again one for an unsuspecting traveller killing time before his train. In the evenings another round of stations, another bout of Volares, and then home with a headache and a thankful heart for the ice and lemon and soda to which I owed so much.

In a fortnight I knew by heart the state of each bottle at





each station. There were eleven tots at Victoria, rather more at Liverpool Street (which I always left till last and sometimes could not face at all); and fewer at Euston where I had initiated a Volare school, or, to be more accurate, had found a regular patron who would drink a Volare if I bought him a whisky as a chaser. Of my anonymity as a Volare salesman or *agent provocateur* I had some considerable doubts. Although I had carefully looked up suitable trains from the various stations, and always carried a small light suitcase, I felt it was unlikely that the barmen really took me for a *bona fide* traveller. I was further convinced of this one evening when I returned to King's Cross and noticed that the Volare bottle which I had left that morning with all of five measures had been tampered with. At least one, possibly two, measures had gone. Noticing my look of astonishment the barman winked at me and said "Your dad was in just now, Mr. Volare."

I gave him a cold stare of disapproval.

"Come now, sir," he said, "it wouldn't do for us two to fall out; you couldn't get that drink anywhere else, and I'd never find another regular to drink it; have one on me."

That evening I met Estrada; he was cheerful as ever.

"Lovely trade at King's Cross," he greeted me now, and I examined him carefully and abortively for a family likeness to justify the barman. "New orders for you, Mr. Volare, get

the stock at all stations down to three quarters of the second bottle and then concentrate on Victoria. Sell them out and make them order more."

Duly, King's Cross, Waterloo, Charing Cross, Euston and finally even Liverpool Street had their Volare stock reduced to Estrada's instructions. At each station, as I drank my last glass I would say goodbye to the barman. "My firm has decided to send me elsewhere. I shall no longer be catching the 6.25" (or whatever the train was). Slowly I would leave for the departure platforms, only changing course for the exit when I was swallowed up by the crowd. Within a month Estrada managed to sell a further six cases to the Railways' Catering manager.

"It sells itself," he told the poor deluded man, "just put it on the shelf, and you see, it sells itself, ask anyone."

That terminated my employment with Estrada; but now and again at railway bars up and down the country I see one or other of those seventy-two bottles of Volare, the popular Italian apéritif. Red and dusty, the bottles stand on inaccessible shelves amidst a cluster of bottles like Atholl Brose, Blue Orchid Cocktail and Ouzo. Come to that, I wonder who made them buy *those*.

Next week: The Two Rs in Nigeria, by Jo Packer



# The Doolittle Syndrome

By PATRICK SKENE CATLING

**F**OR no reason that is any longer very easy to sum up in a few words, I was in Nassau, in the Bahamas, the other day, and quite unexpectedly it was called to my attention that there was a man in the neighbourhood who talks to flamingos.

Talking to flamingos may not sound so very difficult (you just find some flamingos and talk to them), but he talks to fifty of them at a time, and the flamingos all pay attention, and demonstrate beyond doubt that they understand what he tells them.

Everyone, surely, must have wished at some time for Dr. Doolittle's ability to converse with animals and birds. The wish is almost as basic as the childish wishes to alter drastically one's size (Alice), to achieve occasional invisibility (Cheshire Cat), and to fly (Peter Pan), by simple acts of will, aided a little, perhaps, by magic. As years elapse, fantastic hopes may dwindle, yet seem never entirely to perish; and, indeed, as further years

go by the sense of fantasy sometimes grows again: there are men and women who own or are owned by dogs and cats and parakeets who come to believe that human soliloquies heard by pets may after all be dialogues.

People who seek encouragement in this line of speculation could hardly do better than catch the next Britannia bound for New Providence Island. There they can find this man of great renown, Hedley Edwards, a 59-year-old Jamaican Negro with a piercing gaze and a smile like the beam of a lighthouse, who exhibits his flamingos in action in Ardastra Gardens twice a day, all the year round. Visitors to Nassau are told that the spectacle is something they must not miss, and after skin-diving in even the loveliest pellucid turquoise waters that may or may not be frequented by barracuda and sharks, and shopping for straw hats and tortoiseshell trinkets in Bay Street, the notion of some tranquil nature-study in a palmy garden exerts considerable charm.

The night before I visited the flamingos I suddenly realized that I knew nothing about them, so I did some research in a few of the local cultural centres (the Royal Victoria Hotel, the Pilot House Club, Blackbeard's, Junkanoo, The Silver Slipper, Chippie's Confidential, etc.), and, for the benefit of any bird-lovers who may be allergic to planter's punch, I hereby pass on my notes:

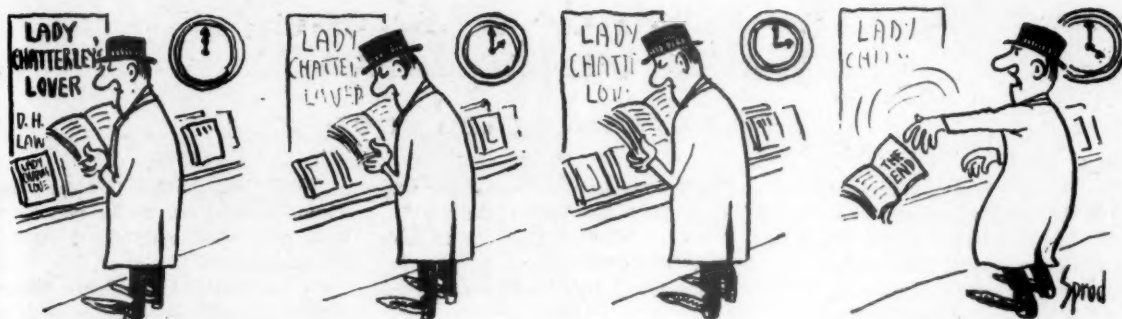
The flamingo (generally called Phoenix, after the phoenix) is a preposterous creature of rare beauty and absurd ungainliness. It has pale scarlet coverts and black pinions, which are displayed attractively in flight. Students of its history, such as the National Audubon Society of New York, have written that Phoenixians used to sell flamingo skins as phoenix skins to gullible pre-Christian Cornish tinminers who aspired to immortality; first century Roman gourmets regarded flamingo tongue as a delicacy; nineteenth-century European and American hat-makers sought flamingo plumes until they were found to fade rapidly after the birds died. There is a song called "Flamingo," which is played best by Duke Ellington's orchestra. The flamingo is a gregarious bird, yet ordinarily shy outside its own flock. It lives usually in quiet, remote brackish swamps and lagoons, and before Mr. Edwards became interested in the idea nobody had thought that any flamingos would want to live in Nassau. The flamingo is widely regarded as quite a high-class bird, even though it is unsuitable for use as a croquet mallet.

It was hot and humid the next morning when about a hundred tourists, mostly Americans off an Italian cruise ship from New York, and I showed up at the Ardastra Gardens for the 11 o'clock exhibition.

A plump Negro woman—who looked like a mammy from an old Southern plantation—sat at the entrance gates eating water melon (flamingo-pink) and taking the dollars. "Only well-behaved children allowed," said one notice on the wall behind her. "Short shorts not allowed," said another. "Mr. Edwards







"Disgusting!"

is particular," she explained. "He wouldn't want the type of visitor who'd disturb those birds of his." Even so, the day's receipts often amounted to several hundred dollars, she said.

The flamingos were standing at ease in an artificial pool that looked like pea soup. Mauve hibiscus blossoms surrounded the water. Another notice said: "These flamingos are the unique gems of the tropical bird world. These birds are gentle. Be very kind and enjoy your visit with them." The audience sat on concentric rows of chairs around a circular lawn. Mr. Edwards stood at a microphone and said:

"On behalf of the birds, welcome to Nassau. After fourteen months of secret experiments and altogether over three years of training, they're doing quite well and keep doing better. I hope they will convince you once and for all that people don't really know what they're talking about when they say 'bird-brained.' These flamingos are intelligent birds, under disciplinary training. The only reward they get for their performance is your applause, so please be generous with it; it means a lot to them. They have been applauded by Lord Beaverbrook and the Prime Minister of Canada and Winthrop Rockefeller."

Mr. Edwards lectured briefly on the care and feeding of the flamingos. They were fed shrimp meal, peas and rice and "calf manna." The male birds were inclined to be vain, he said, and he got better results from the females—"but then all females respond better than males to loving kindness," he added with a wink at an appreciatively giggling matron in Bermuda shorts.

At last he turned toward the pool

and called: "Are you ready?" and there was an excited flutter of wings and some soft bleating honks. "All right," he shouted with sergeant-majorly vigour; "Pa-rade! Fall in!" Without an instant of hesitation, the fifty flamingos began marching in a compact group up the steps from the water to the grass. "All right," Mr. Edwards shouted. "Mark time!"—and their long thin legs, like hinged sticks of rhubarb, moved obediently up and down in unison.

"Of course they're not all perfect," Mr. Edwards said. "There are a few renegades, a few shirkers, in every army. But still . . . All right: for-ward march! By the left . . . a-bout turn!"—they all immediately turned about as one bird—"a-bout turn! . . . a-bout turn!" Again and again, he moved them to and fro like a squad of infantry recruits. "And now," he said, "our wing display." He ordered the flamingos forward on the double—"on the double, I said," he said—and they rushed around the circle, flapping their wings and honking. He halted them within a few feet of visitors with cameras and allowed the birds to stand easy. Then he brought them to attention again and shouted: "Dis-miss! Re-tire!" and they meekly turned and marched back into their pool, while we clapped.

"Well," Mr. Edwards said proudly to the spectators, "when you go from here I want you to tell it to the army, and tell it to the navy, and by all means tell it to the marines. I know they won't believe you, but you've seen it with your own eyes."

How had he done it? Mr. Edwards would not say, so I questioned one of the flamingos.

"How do you *think* he did it?" the flamingo said, his tiny yellow eye glittering crossly. "He's right: this is just the same as any other bloody army. Nothing but bull and nagging and drill, day in, day out. We walk our feet off almost, and the C.O. takes all the credit. The applause isn't really for us. And you heard that crack about renegades and shirkers. . ."

At that moment Mr. Edwards came up and asked me if I would sign the visitors' book.

"And back in the pool, you," he said to the flamingo. In reply the flamingo only honked, and it was still honking as we walked away, but now I couldn't understand a word. It was very hot and humid.

## Août

ALTHOUGH my rule is *chacun à son goût*

Some things I find it hard to tolerate;  
For instance, when in France I frankly hate

Having to call the month of August *août*.  
Pronouncing it I make a peevish *moue*  
At which the cruder natives cachinnate,  
And cultured females whom I try to date

Sheer off, regarding me as slightly *fou*.  
They do not share my classic sense of shame.

At the appalling act of desecration  
Which has debased a noble Roman name

Into an infantile ejaculation  
Such as august Augustus, I suppose,  
Would utter only when he stubbed his toes.

— E. V. MILNER

*Scowle in the Sixties*

## Wakes on the Brava

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

ONE cold winter's night when the gutters of Byron Road ran like mountain torrents and the rain thrashing against the lounge windows could plainly be heard above the mixed din of the telly, the radio, the record-player, Jim's Powermaster drill and Mum's auto-washer, we were startled by the sudden appearance of my sister Selena clad only in a breath-taking bikini of orange and black candy stripes. She was smiling haughtily like the runner-up in a beauty contest, and she paraded before us with the loping dignity of a French mannequin. Twice across the room as far as the gramophone-bar and back to the door.

My Dad put down the *Scowle Echo*.

"What's this in aid of then?" he said.

"Like it?" said Selena. "My new gift to the boys of the Costa Brava."

"Very nice too," said Jim, my elder brother, "what there is of it."

"You've got gooseflesh," said Dad. "Get dressed, girl."

My mother came in from the kitchen wiping her hands on an apron printed with forks, spoons, pepper pots and other culinary accessories.

"My Gawd!" she said. "Look what the cat's brought in!"

"Like it, Mum?" said Selena. "It's from Hammerton's. Knocked down from three guineas to twenty-seven and eleven."

"Has Reg seen it?" said mother. (Reg Peskett was Selena's steady.)

"Not yet, but he likes me to look smart," said Selena, "and there's a lot of competition these days on the Costa Brava."

"You can forget Costa Brava," Mum said, blowing back a fugitive wisp of hair from her forehead.

"Forget what?" said Dad.

"The Costa Brava," said mother. "We're giving it a rest this year."

We just looked at each other.

"Yes," said Mum, "we're giving it a rest."

"But it's already arranged," said Selena. "I mean, I've told Reg and everything!"

"But we *always* go to the Costa Brava," said Dad. "What's got into you, woman?"

"That's just it," mother said, "*we* always go: all Byron Road *always* goes to the Costa Brava. This year we don't. We're not living in a Communist state just yet."

"We always enjoy ourselves there, don't we? What's the difficulty?" said Dad.

"Oh, you lot," mother said, "that's all you think about, enjoying yourselves. Can't you ever think about bettering yourselves? Can't you see that the Brava's become dead common?"

"You didn't say that last year," said Jim.

"Well, I'm saying it this year," said Mum, "and I mean it. So you can off with that bikini and take it back to Hammerton's!"

"Take it back!" said Selena, aghast. "Why? Even if we're not going to the Costa Brava we're going somewhere surely."

"No, we're staying at home," said mother.

Actually my mother had been the first one, six years ago, to suggest the Costa Brava as a change from Blackpool.

"What's the game, lass?" said Dad. "Out with it!"

"I'm sorry," said mother. "It's just that there's no class in going abroad any more. Everybody goes. The Costa Brava, Majorca, Rome, the bloomin' Riviera . . . everybody. It's become common. You look round at the really respectable folks in Scowle," she said, "Mrs. Tipper, the Vicar, Sir Andrew, Miss Giddish. Where do they go for their holidays? They don't go gallivanting off to foreign parts. Not them. They stay right here in Scowle."

"Why don't we go back to Blackpool then?" said Jim.

"Never," said mother. "Blackpool's for folk who haven't the money to go abroad."

Selena started to cry.

"And you can shut up, you can," Mum said, "you and your fancy bathing-costume."



"These litter baskets don't help to improve the rural beauty much."



"Can't you forget the revolution for a little while? This is fiesta time."

Of course my mother had her own way. She let it be known that the Hunsletts would be holidaying at home at 134 Byron Road, and she hinted that unlike some folk she could mention we should be relaxing over plain living and high thinking. Mrs. Craddick, for one, didn't care for her attitude.

"Oh," she said one day in Nuggett's Cut Price Stores, "so we're staying put in August, are we? Joined the gentry, have we? The Costa Brava's not good enough, I suppose, for the likes of us?"

"We just don't want all the fuss and bother of going away," said Mum.

"Unsociable and unsocial, I call it," said Mrs. Craddick. "You know we get cheap rates for parties. Well, where should we be if other people in Byron Road decided to do as they like and not to go to the Costa Brava? It's not neighbourly."

When the wakes holiday came round and Byron Road set off *en masse* for Spain we soon discovered that our matriarch-inspired independence was to involve us in some inconvenience. The first day of the holiday dawned without milk, bread or newspapers. My mother sent me down to the dairy in Totnes Place. "They've forgotten the milk," she said. "Jump on your bike and fetch four pints."

"You forgot to leave the milk this morning, Mr. Latham," I said, parking three empties on the counter.

"No, we didn't forget, young man," said the dairyman. "It's not economic to continue delivery for just the one house. Tell your ma you'll have to fetch it daily until Byron Road gets back from Spain."

We got the same treatment at all the shops, and Mum was livid.

The next day the water was turned off—and the electricity. My Dad went to the corner phone booth to check up.

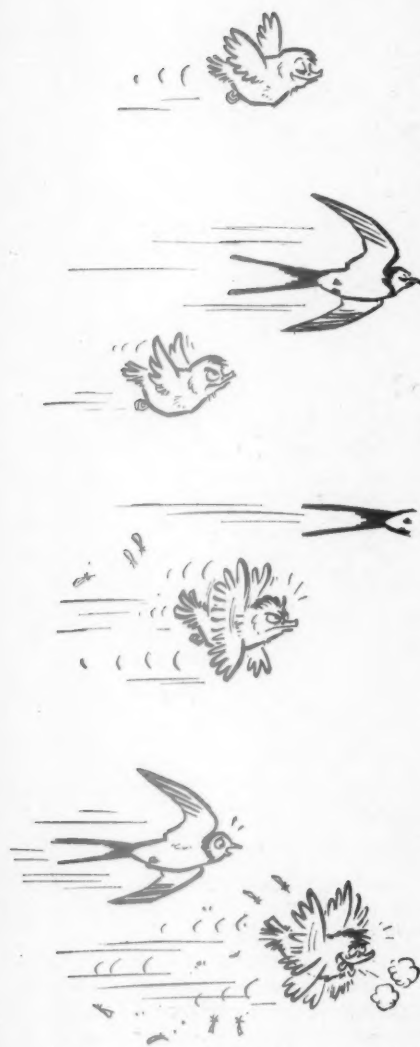
"I'm sorry," said the Water Board Supervisor, "but we always use this period to overhaul the service. The mains are being tested and disinfected. Nothing I can do about it. There's a pump in Addison Square at the bottom of Greatbach Row: I advise you to use that."

"I'm sorry," said the district electricity superintendent, "but we always use this period for maintenance and repairs. It's inconvenient, I know, but I'm powerless in the matter. Lucky, I suppose, we're having a heatwave and don't need fires."

"What about the telly and the fridge?" Dad said, but the line went dead on him.

The one service that didn't fold up





on us was the post. We got plenty of postcards—scores of them . . .

"Having wonderful time. Wish you were here. How's old Byron Road? And will you look after Tibby for us—you'll find her in the outhouse of 112, she gets in through window. Key under mat. 'Topcat' on shelf. Thanks. Just off for a few glasses of vino with the girls. Be good! Elsie Smales."

"Having a wonderful time. Better than ever, weather smashing. Writing this on beach. Love, Milly Tonsett. P.S. Would you mind very much putting h.w. bottle in Sam's bed? He's O.K., but you know what his rheumatism is like. Key behind dustbin, h.w.b. in airing-cubboard. Ta!"

"Having a smashing time. All send fondest love. If you've time will you take my Bob's library book back to the 'Sixpenny Circuit' in Exton (opposite Woolworth's)? It's overdue, and he's forgotten it. It's called *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or something and is probably in the sitting room or the downstairs lav. D'you mind? I'd be most grateful. Take care of yourselves and have a real rest. Yours, Mary Tonkin."

There were masses—all containing requests of some kind.

"What they think we are?" said Mum, "lackeys?"

But having nothing better to do (the power being off we were without TV) we were frankly at a loose end and didn't really mind running Byron Road's errands, feeding dogs and cats, filling hot water bottles, and so on. It was something to pass the time.

On the Thursday morning at breakfast (cold), Selena said she'd had a card from Reg, and that he seemed to be having a smashing time on the Costa Brava.

"He *would*!" she said angrily.

"Let him then," Mum said. "There's plenty more fish in the sea."

"Yes, in the sea," said Selena. "There's an excursion to Morecambe to-morrow. Let's go—just for the day."

"Let's, Mum," I said.

"I'm in favour, lass," said Dad.

"Excursion!" said my mother, in a voice like a town crier's. "I'll give you



excursion. Why, excursions are the lowest trains that run. I should never hold up my head again in Byron Road if it got about that we'd been on an excursion. Don't mention it again—please!"

"Yes, but it's *my* holiday," said Selena, beginning to sob again.

The next morning workmen descended on Byron Road with drills and began to take up the old cobbles. The din was deafening and the dust got into everything. Dad went off to the bowling green (there was no-one to play golf with him) and played by himself for an hour or so. Selena kept trying on her bikini. Mum got frantic trying to knock up new and different cold meals without the help of the telly and the fridge.

The second Tuesday was the worst day of the fortnight. On that day there were three funerals in Scowle and we more or less had to go along and support the thinned-out mourners. As Dad put it, "Folks are dam' unlucky to fall asleep when everybody's on holiday: we'll just have to muck in and pay our respects to the deceased." Two visits to the cemetery, one to the crematorium, and all day long we were saying a sort of rhubarb-rhubarb under our breath, trying to make the dear departed feel they were getting a full house for the send-off. It was a very tired and queasy group of Hunsletts that made its way that night back to the gloom and dust of 134 Byron Road.

And next morning there were a dozen more postcards on the mat.

☆

#### For Onward Transmission, Please

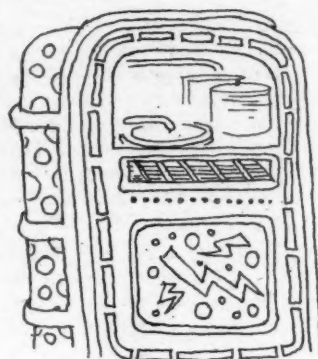
"ACCRA. Friday.—The Catholic Bishop of the Ashanti and Brongahfo regions of Ghana, the Right Rev. Andrew van den Bronk, said to-day that he had issued directives to all Catholic priests in the two regions that prayers for the Queen after every Sunday mass should now be directed to the new President and his Government."

*Northern News, Northern Rhodesia*



HARGREAVES.

"It's spoiled everything!"



Gahan Wilson

## Oddinburgh Festival—Programme Notes

### No. 1. OPERA

*Giuggiola Di Stockport*  
by BOMINETTI

ACT I: Giuggiola, driven mad with grief at the supposed murder of her rich husband, Don Zuccone, by one of his avaricious twin sons, sits sewing in an upper chamber while her lover, Carciofo, vainly presses his suit in the courtyard below.

ACT II: Masquerading as one of her sons, the vengeful Giuggiola meets his twin masquerading as her. They plot each other's death, little realizing that each is the other, but are unwittingly observed by Carciofo (*Ecco due peculiari!*) who mistakes the identity of both.

ACT III: The twins quarrel as to which shall inherit the family fortune by killing Giuggiola (*Lascia mi strangolar mia madre*) who has meanwhile poisoned their wine. Too late to prevent their deaths, Carciofo confesses that for love of Giuggiola he devised Don Zuccone's death which in fact (owing to a mishap) never occurred. Don Zuccone enters

and kills Carciofo. At the shock of her "defunct" husband's return, Giuggiola (in a powerful and dramatic aria: *Che sorpresa!*) goes sane.

### No. 2. BALLET

*Floribund and Bathilde*

ACT I: While hunting in the Black Forest with his tutor, Count Lambert, Prince Floribund shoots down an Albatross who confesses to being a Princess under the spell of the magician, Grubarth, King of the Sillis. Amazed, the Prince leaves.

ACT II: Floribund and Lambert are distracted by the Dance of the Sillis. "Prancing in shifts and scatt'ring night-florets, the pensive ghost-maidens bewail their loss of flesh."—H. Heine. Lambert goes off with a Silli.

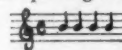
ACT III: Grubarth (disguised as an owl) nurses the Magic Bladder which contains his soul. As Floribund pierces it with his poniard, the Albatross is transformed into the unexpected shape of Princess Bathilde. The Prince leaves again.

### No. 3. CONCERT

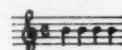
*Concertinetto In C Major (for triangle and orchestra)*

by FODOR BOHL (1864—)

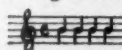
An ominous opening theme



appears at first to lead nowhere and the composer boldly abandons it to make way for his second subject—an inversion of the first:



which, before it can be developed, returns us triumphantly to a restatement of the opening theme. This is exhaustively decorated in a cadenza (left to the improvisation of the soloist) which culminates in the re-appearance of both themes ingeniously interwoven:



before the plaintive but insistent re-entry of the opening passage brings the passage to a close. (*R. St. J. C.*)

— PAUL DEHN

## In the City



### Never Neverland

THE sharp rise in the number of prisoners received from the County Courts over the past few years—the figure was 928 in 1953, 4,821 in 1959—can be blamed very largely on hire-purchase troubles. In their report for last year the Commissioners of Prisons say that “These prisoners come, we have reason to believe, largely as a result of failure to pay commercial debts of which the bulk have been incurred through hire-purchase agreements.” This is a sad but inevitable result of the fantastic H.P. boom. It will be seized upon by all those who regard instalment buying as an invention of the devil and used as proof positive that the system leads only to disaster, moral turpitude and the breaking up of happy English homes. In fact, of course, the proportion of defaulters among new borrowers is no higher than it used to be: hire-purchase has been made easier, too easy perhaps, and the number of witless, unlucky, improvident and rascally borrowers has merely kept pace with the boom in general business.

Bad payers there will always be, and the larger units among the hire-purchase and credit sales organizations have protected themselves to some extent by compiling a black list of them. The smaller companies, anxious to win more business, are prepared to take greater risks, and it is among these companies, obviously, that we find most of the bad debts. In the interests of all—the investor no less than the borrower—it is desirable that list should be more widely utilized.

To what extent the Government's credit restrictions and the damper on hire-purchase imposed at the end of April have affected the bad debts situation is not yet clear. The general level of the boom in H.P. has fallen quite markedly—not because of any reduction in demand but because financial backing

has contracted—by nearly twenty per cent (June) compared with last year. But so far there is little evidence to suggest that stiffer credit terms mean fewer bad debts, and the truth may be just the opposite—that the smaller the business done on the never-never the higher the proportion of risky prospects fluttering acquisitively round the flame of easy affluence. So far, the dip in sales has been most marked in motor vehicles (where credit is afforded by the finance houses) and less marked in sales of durable household goods. And some of the motor companies have taken a pretty hard knock as a result.

Will the demand trend continue? Well, the market obviously does not think so. The last fortnight has seen a small but telling rise in nearly all equities, including the shares of H.P. houses, and it is obvious that one large section of the investing public—the institutional investors of the insurance and pension fund world—are convinced

that to buy now is to take advantage of the next swing of the credit see-saw. They of course can afford to take the long-term optimistic view of Government policy, and their guidance is really of little help to the lone ranger of the markets, the investor who cannot afford to sweat it out with the big gangs. He, poor chap, must make up his own mind with his own money, and at the moment the only advice we can offer is to sit tight.

In the long run there can be little doubt that H.P. will blossom and bloom again: it has become part and parcel of our economic life and no Government can now afford to see it languish. If the advice to sit tight is not exciting enough then a long and speculative look at such propositions as Bowmaker, Mercantile Credit, United Dominions Trust (Mr. J. Gibson Jarvie's Report for 1959-60 is most encouraging) may be, as the pundits say, the best “saver.”

—CLARE HOUGHTON

## In the Country



### Bats in the Kitchen

YOU never get accustomed to bats—as you can, for instance, compromise with snails or reach a *modus vivendi* with fieldmice.

At the moment we've got bats in our kitchen, and hysterical opinion—the result of carrying a full tray of dishes thoughtlessly into the scullery without turning on the light—is that they intend to take over the whole house. These Odd Things came to us from outer space via the tool-shed. They found the shed overcrowded; they soon began to knock on our lounge windows after dark and they infiltrated into the kitchen because at the time we did not see the necessity for barricading ourselves in.

The trouble is, I suppose, that we live on the fringe of a village buttressed from winds on one side, by the pine forests of Knoydart and the marches of Lochaber on the other. Our nights

are soundless and calm—conditions perfect for aerobatics.

We are not yet in a state of siege. We are free to go about the house during the day. But it's disconcerting to find a small vampire-like creature lying on the floor when one wants to make morning tea. To the touch, bats are both soft and leathery, fragile and naked. They are harmless (we keep assuring each other) and helpless; perhaps they are even affectionate, judging by their passion for our company. They will dart to within a foot of our cowering heads, hear our hearts beating, and side-slip, with a queer rusty sound, away.

They hang during the day silent and critical from the edges of blinds and shelves, and look like thick grey-black inverted clothes pegs. Our variety ranges in size from that of a large butterfly to a sparrow. You can't—or we can't—destroy bats. You can only futilely shake brooms at them, or flick dusters; shouting or banging things surprisingly leaves them literally unmoved. They are confused and confusing Things, hurrying frenziedly to nowhere. I bought an electric miasma-exuding fly/moth killer and set it to work on the kitchen table. The bat population increased overnight. I burned lime in a saucer and we tasted it, particularly in soup, for days, but this only made our guests active by light as well as by dark. I know now that they not only can't see, they can't taste either.

—FERGUSON MACLAY



## GROWING PAINS



"My God! Ethel, he's shrunk!"



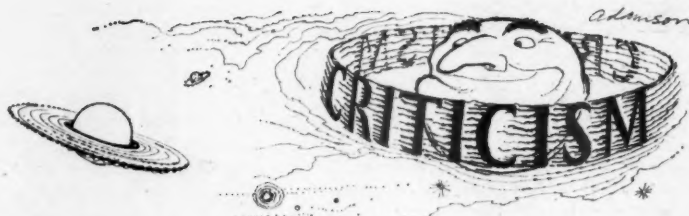
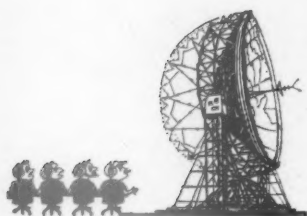
"I'm worried about him, Paul. He doesn't listen to his cereal any more."



"There's nothing in Dr. Spock about it."



"Don't call me, I'll call you."



## AT THE PICTURES

*Il Tetto*

*Eternal Ecstasy*

WHY we haven't before now been able to see *Il Tetto* (Director: Vittorio de Sica), which won a prize at the Cannes Festival in 1956, I don't know. One's almost tempted to think that their reason for putting it on even now is an idea that its commercial chances may be helped by the topicality in London of its theme (as a result of the increasing fuss about the Rent Act and the difficulty of finding accommodation). . . . But I don't seriously suggest this, because



STARRING

*Il Tetto*

Natale—GIORGIO LISTUZZI  
Luisa—GABRIELLA PALLOTTA

it's a charming picture, sensitively played and effectively worked out as a story, and thoroughly enjoyable for almost anybody.

"Il tetto" means "the roof," and the problem of Luisa and Natale, the young people whom we see at the beginning just after their marriage, is quite simply to find one, anywhere in Rome. Luisa's father disapproves of the marriage, and they are rebuffed when they go to his house; Natale has been living with his own family, but if they go back there that, "with the baby my sister's expecting," will make *ten* in a two-room flat. At first there is nothing else for it, but they very soon find it unbearable, and each independently gets a makeshift place to sleep elsewhere.

Then they find there is a way round the building regulations: if a house, of sorts—one room, so long as it has a door and a roof—can be put up complete in one night, and they can be in it when the police come at eight a.m., the claim is established and they can stay there. Natale is a bricklayer; he borrows money for materials and his friends help him, but the first attempt goes wrong. Then comes the long, beautifully handled, amusing, touching episode of the second attempt, leading up with increasing suspense to the climax as eight o'clock approaches—will they get the roof done in time?

Gabriella Pallotta and Giorgio Listuzzi are excellent as the young couple; but every tiniest scene is made credible and entertaining, and every character however briefly or momentarily concerned—from the householder wakened by the telephone that rings for Luisa (who is camping in the house without his knowledge) to the mysterious small boy who appears in the middle of the night to watch the building operations and play, fascinated, with the paraffin lamp. As a whole the picture is most attractive.

I was distracted from the undeniable merits of the French film *La Main Chaude* by what seemed to me the cynical dishonesty of showing it under the English title *Eternal Ecstasy* (Director: Gérard Oury). *Main chaude* is defined in the dictionary as an equivalent of the old party game of "hot cockles," in which (says Brewer), "one blindfolded knelt down, and being struck had to guess who gave the blow," and in conveying this idea makes a perfect title for the film. The phrase *eternal ecstasy* has no bearing on anything in it; not one of the characters achieves, expects, hopes for or even mentions eternal ecstasy, practically all are progressively

disappointed, and the most endearing one of them is a sad and pathetic figure at the fadeout . . . though the film itself is full of entertaining detail. It's hard not to conclude that the title is deliberately aimed at those who are expected, bearing in mind the film's "X" certificate, to get a confused but commercially profitable idea that the whole thing must be very hot stuff. I still have a faint hope that sooner or later someone with influence will realize how much of the lost audience for films consists of people who have got tired of being insulted and misled by the publicity.

The pattern of the story might be called a relay-swindle. The gentle widow (Paulette Goddard) gets to know the waiter (Alfred Adam) and soft-heartedly gives her savings to send his little boy (so he says) on holiday, but he really wanted them for his young mistress (Macha Meril), who gives them to a younger boy friend she thinks will take her to Italy, but he (Jacques Charrier) has another girl to whom he gives the money, wrongly believing that she . . . and so on. Summarized it sounds very artificial, but it is done with perceptive, humorous sympathy, and again there is that satisfying whiff of credibility and interest about all the incidental scenes. For example: at the beginning, we have to be made aware that the man is a waiter, and so we are shown him at work, briskly and with the most complacent efficiency serving a meal to three priests. The scene is over in a few moments, it takes hardly longer than would somebody's statement that he was a waiter; but how infinitely more entertaining!

### Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London: the absorbing *Inherit the Wind* (20/7/60), the scintillating *Black Orpheus* (8/6/60), the satirically amusing *The Apartment* (3/8/60), and of course *Psycho* (17/8/60), which unlike some other people I thought pretty well of.

One interesting release: *The Gallant Hours* ("Survey," 20/7/60—115 mins.), about Admiral Halsey and the Guadalcanal fighting.

—RICHARD MALLETT

### PUNCH EXHIBITIONS

"Punch in the Cinema." Odeon, Oldham.

"Punch in the Theatre." Opera House, Scarborough.

## IN THE GROOVE

## The Trend of Sleeves

**E**VEN though I failed my entrance examination for the elementary class at Arthur Murray's, I have never believed the pleasures of jazz to be exclusively cerebral; but expressions of this belief are sometimes not well received, and I have learned to behave like the others: when records are being played I sit silent and immobile and read the sleeves.

In the not very distant days of 78 r.p.m. records, sleeves used to be plain envelopes that announced little or nothing more than the names of the manufacturers. Information about the records themselves, such as it was, appeared on the labels, and very often if one wanted to know details about individual players one had to resort to the discographies and other encyclopaedic reference books, none of which, of course, could ever keep quite up to date. The advent of long-playing records, the suddenly increased popularity of records, and the proliferation of highly competitive record companies made the presentation, the packaging, of records commercially important. The results have been mixed, and not all good.

Some of the sleeve photographs have been excellent, especially some of the portraits of musicians in action; but more and more designers nowadays resort to cheesecake that has no more apparent connection with the records than the covers of the more lurid paper-back books have with the novels within. But the fronts of the sleeves are usually at least decorative. It is the text that so often seems worse than useless.

What one really wants to know is what musicians play what instruments on what bands of the record; where and when the recordings were made, and any relevant information about the composer and arranger. If one is a hi-fi fanatic, one might even be interested to read some of the technical data, such as were written on the cover of "Taboo" (Hifirecord):

Perfect sound reproduction was achieved with 3 AKG Austrian microphones, a custom built Ampex 3-track ½" magnetic tape stereophonic recorder, and later painstaking processing, using a scully automatically variable pitch lathe with latest Westrex cutting head to make the master disc.

One just might be interested. But it seems improbable that anybody could derive any benefit from a note such as this (by Nat Hentoff, on the sleeve of "Cu-Bop," by Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers; London):

Charlie Shavers' "Dawn in the Desert" begins with Johnny (not Griffin) stepping out of store-windows all over the oases but, after that background camel-ride is happily over, the track settles down into a firmly pulsating, blues-shaded series of intent messages from the soloists.

Or this (from the sleeve of "Swingin' on The Golden Gate," by Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band; R.C.A.):

Bob Scobey has just sliced one into the pond. Clancy Hayes clutched his



HIRAM SHERMAN

GRAHAM STARK

[The Art of Living  
CAROLE SHELLEY

5-iron for support and stated with Hayes-like gusto: "Man, what a swing!" All of which goes to prove that swing has a lot of meanings all its own. For instance, this album has nothing whatsoever to do with what would happen were some daredevil to attach a couple of 100-foot ropes to the Golden Gate Bridge with each fastened to a strong board . . .

Some sleeve-writers report happenings in the studio when the record was made. They do not always add to one's appreciation or understanding of the musicians or their music. Here, for example, is some supposedly sleeve-worthy dialogue that occurred between Erroll Garner and an anonymous colleague, when they were making a record for Philips:

"Erroll, did you bring another shirt?"

"No, don't need it."

"You'll catch cold."

"Nnfm." ("Naw, not me," from within a towel.)

"Look, I got a T-shirt under this. Put it on for a while."

"Are those engineers ready for the next one?"

A new extreme of sleeve triviality seemed to be reached by Teo Macero in his notes on Duke Ellington's "Blues in Orbit," also Philips. During that studio session, Mr. Macero relates,

The sizzling steak arrived with two portions of American cheese, two halves of grapefruit, one large jar filled with black coffee and halves of lemon, and a small hamburger for me. I'm a little plump anyway . . .

I do not really care at all about the shapes or sizes of the people who write the sleeves. If Mr. Macero's example is imitated I'll have to give up sleeves altogether. While more patient fans read

them all around me I'll just sit a-rockin' with my eyes shut and tap my foot.

— PATRICK SKENE CATLING

## AT THE PLAY

## The Art of Living (CRITERION)

**T**HE second half of *The Art of Living*, a new revue "based on the writings of Art Buchwald," is so much better than the first that Laurier Lister, its producer, would be well advised to re-shuffle his pack as soon as possible. Lacking a knowledge of Mr. Buchwald's work, it is hard to find any common note running through the evening except the gentle, rather literary monologues delivered by a friendly American comedian, Hiram Sherman. There is nothing particularly new in these, but the one that studies the kind of traveller who goes ritzy abroad, hating everything, for the sole pleasure of getting back to his awful home again, is amusing.

The best item in the starved first half shows a Spanish policeman revelling in his country's popularity with film-makers, and is the kind of crisp lyric of which this entertainment stands in need (Monty Norman, David Heneker, Julian More and Johnny Speight are its creators). But in

## REP. SELECTION

Queen's, Hornchurch, *Five Finger Exercise*, until August 27th.

Playhouse, Salisbury, *The Compliant Lover*, until August 27th.

Leatherhead Theatre, *The Pleasure of His Company*, until August 27th.

Bromley Rep., *Roar Like a Dove*, until August 27th.





"Ralph! You're not supposed to stare at them—they're supposed to stare at us."

the second half an agreeable touch of lunacy, already hinted at in the stalking of an American visitor by an Empire Loyalist in a park, blossoms happily and we see another unfortunate American captured late at night in an Edinburgh bar by the tail-end of an R.A.F. reunion, and forced to take part in a dramatic reconstruction of a dog-fight over the Channel; and a patient in a Viennese clinic who is examined by a doctor of music and found to be sadly out of tune. In this and other improved material Graham Stark shows himself a valuable revue comedian, small, eel-like and insolent, Carole Shelley displays a useful vein of satire, and Edward Woodward (who was the Spanish policeman) a mastery of comic accent. All the team are bright and hard-working. If too many of the ideas seem to peter out ineffectively, at least there are more of them than can be found in the average revue and taken from a wider field. The décor, by Voytex, is consistently good.

#### Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)  
*Troilus and Cressida* (Stratford-upon-Avon 10/8/60), this season's best production. *A Man for All Seasons* (Globe—13/7/60), Paul Scofield as Sir Thomas More. *The Caretaker* (Duchess—11/5/60), taka Pinter night.

—ERIC KEOWN

#### ON THE AIR

##### Pocket Superman

THE idea behind "The Adventures of Hiram Holliday" (BBC) is encouraging: let the mickey be taken out of all those TV thriller series with far-fetched plots and indestructible heroes. For once, cannibalistic, television feeds on its own monsters. Sometimes it works. Holliday, a weedy, wide-eyed natural history enthusiast with hat and glasses too big and a winning little-boy grin, is involved each week in some fresh piece of solemn lunacy: the clichés of the TV treadmill tumble over one another in a most engaging fashion—sinister agents, deadly secrets, beckoning vamps, cliff-hanging situations, bloodthirsty villains and all the rest of the fo-fum—while Holliday, neatly played by Wally Cox, wanders unscathed amid the devilry, saving his native United States (or any other deserving cause which happens to be handy) from disaster after disaster by his innocence, his ambiguous resource or, when absolutely necessary, his downright and absurdly reckless courage. It is good fun for young and old, but it could be better, and I know how. First, the close-ups are dull and unconvincing. They hold up the action and break the spell. I get the impression that they are photographed long after the

rest of the film has been hung up in the cutting room, and then interpolated with a heavy hand. They consist mainly of reaction shots that would have been considered over-long even by Douzhenko. Second, the sound-track includes laughter, evidently from an audience watching the finished product in a viewing-room, somewhat on the lines of the technique used in the *Bilko* films. It is not successful, partly because the audience doesn't seem to think the show is nearly hilarious enough, and partly because it has a phony, hollow sound which is distracting. Third, the sharp effect of the parody is blunted by the writer's sentimental attachment to his gawky hero: at the end of each episode we are somehow left with the feeling that Holliday is intended to represent the essential, unsung Greatness of all little ordinary men, like you and me; and that kind of metrogoldwynplated phooey is out of place. (Still, come to think of it, it might have been intended in the original stories. I understand they were by Paul Gallico.)

Breaking a life-long rule, I watched the second instalment of a whodunit serial—"Here Lies Miss Sabry" (BBC)—without having prepared myself by watching the first. As a result I have none but the vaguest notions about what's what, who's dead, or how we go from where. In these circumstances it might seem out of place for me to make a critical comment, but I am bound to say that Sebastian Shaw, Petra Davies and Derrick Sherwin seemed to be giving excellent performances.

I don't know about anybody else, but I'm grateful to the BBC for letting me see *The Soldier's Tale*, a work which had previously existed for me only as a selection from Stravinsky's eerie score on a 78 r.p.m. 12 in. The music in the BBC version was most beautifully played by an orchestra led by Youis Yffer and conducted by Keith Darlington, and I found the whole show (adapted by Colin Graham from the New Opera Company's stage production) quaintly chilling. There was a touch of Brecht in the air, and perhaps a hint of Cranko, and the original conception (part chamber concert, part mime, part ballet, part recitation) was well suited to television.

I like to keep up with as many of the artistic developments of this bustling century as possible, but I confess that there are certain things I cannot bring myself to watch. I have, for example, seen three consecutive minutes of an entertainment called "It's Only Money," and I hope that in the evening of my days the memory will at last have ceased to nag. Of "What's It All About?" (BBC), I have so far watched three whole sessions. Always charitable, I am moved to suggest that this is a game which hasn't quite come off. It is the sort of project that looks deceptively promising on paper, and I can't help feeling that the BBC might with advantage have spent a little more time on test flights before launching their defenceless panel in such a machine. Alan Simpson often seems to be fumbling for his escape-hatch mechanism.

—HENRY TURTON

# BOOKING OFFICE

## MEDICAL MILESTONES

By RICHARD GORDON

**Microbes, Men and Monarchs.** Aldo Castellani. *Gollancz*, 25/-

**The Early History of Surgery.** W. J. Bishop. *Robert Hale*, 18/-

AND who is Castellani? The question inevitably followed the exhibition of Castellani's fuchsin paint—bright red, and very good for the ringworm—in my skin class. But medical students are an ignorant lot. It's hard enough remembering the names of all those instruments, preparations, and diseases, without mugging up biographies of the distinguished specialists who have gone into history coupled with them. Thus examiners are easily able to show their cultural superiority, though one base fellow stooped to asking "Who was Bi-coudé?" when questioning candidates about the French double-elbowed catheter.

A more kind-hearted and understanding physician gently let his *viva voce* candidates know they had failed by bringing the conversation round to cholera and inquiring "Tell me who Pettenkofer was." Several students, finding themselves for once in the corridor without being asked this dreadful question, put their heads back to add "By the way, sir, he was a Munich chemist interested in epidemiology who lived from 1818 to 1901."

But there is more to Aldo Castellani than the paint. As one of the team investigating sleeping sickness in Uganda in 1903 he made the fundamental discovery of trypanosomes in the cerebrospinal fluid, which led David Bruce to establish the tsetse fly as the vector of the disease and to its eventual control. Castellani was also a Professor in Colombo Medical College, head of the medical services in the Italian armies invading Abyssinia—their victory has been credited to his prophylactic measures against malaria—recipient of the K.C.M.G., physician to Mussolini, Harley Street consultant, specialist with the Italian North African forces in the Second World War, escort for the Italian royal family after the Armistice, and physician to the exiled King Umberto in Portugal. He writes

of these medical and martial adventures casually and even cosily, and if he lingers on the poshness of some of his patients this must be forgiven in a physician of his standing.

Ignorant students have long been grateful to Mr. W. J. Bishop, whose book with Mr. Hamilton Bailey, F.R.C.S., *Notable Names in Medicine and Surgery*, has helped them to enlighten examiners on the identity of so many dead doctors. *The Early History of Surgery*, written with the accuracy and authority expected of an author who has spent his lifetime in medical libraries, describes the progress of surgery until the mid-nineteenth century, when the introduction of anaesthesia and antiseptics first relieved the terrors of the patient and the frustrations of the operator.

Modern patients will be interested to learn that Neolithic man suffered from arthritis, sinusitis, tumours, and congenital deformities, conditions which have seen no remarkable advances in treatment in the interim. Our ancestors did better surgically than medically—

diseases could be ascribed to spirits, but a bash on the head was a self-evident fact—and though the English soldiers at Crécy suffered horribly from dysentery they carried a first-aid kit of cobwebs to check haemorrhages. (Cobwebs might, too—any fine filament encourages coagulation.) Repair of the personal ravages of war was the most powerful stimulant to primitive surgery, producing such forthright practitioners as Ambroise Paré and Baron Larrey, Napoleon's surgeon and friend who dodged through the battles in his *ambulance volante* and whipped off 200 limbs in twenty-four hours after Borodino. The excellent method of refrigeration anaesthesia the Baron used at that time has only recently come into vogue in British operating theatres.

Surgeons were quicker then—they had to be, or the patient escaped. As an ex-anaesthetist, I hope that William Cheselden, the eighteenth-century urologist who could remove a stone from the bladder in thirty seconds, remains an example to our modern operators. They have unhappily developed the same lordly indifference to the clock as our modern Test Match batsmen, and their averages aren't nearly so public, either.

## NEW NOVELS

**The Passion.** Roger Manvell. *Heinemann*, 18/-

**Berthe in Paradise.** Berthe Grimault. *W. H. Allen*, 13/6

**Mr. Engel's Eye.** Patricia Collinge. *Gollancz*, 15/-

**Three Men on the Left Hand.** Ilka Chase. *W. H. Allen*, 15/-

Quality in mind and style makes Roger Manvell always worth reading, and in his second novel *The Passion* worth grumbling at. Here is the story of a priest, celibate, dedicated, and noted for his exciting sermons, falling suddenly in love with a married woman and, knowing doubts as well as guilt, renouncing the Church. So far so good; Mr. Manvell matches Father Snow's turbulent action with a chaos of thought that does say something. But from the moment when Snow hands in his letters of Holy Orders and settles down to a new life and livelihood the book seems to me to diminish, the conflict to be over. Snow takes to acting, reaches the top, is awakened by an affair—the theme indeed pretty well resolves into the effects of forty years' virginity on one kind of man. There is also the straight stage-success story going on; as nice to read as ever, except when it succumbs to that most wearisome of fictional ploys, the line-by-line commentary on the great Shakespearean performance.

Admirers of pig-girl Berthe Grimault's earthy talent did some bizarre pondering on what sort of book might come from her year at that English finishing-

## PRESENTING THE CRITICS



21—FELIX APRAHAMIAN

Music, Sunday Times

school. Well, here is *Berthe in Paradise*, which may call itself a novel but has the bones of fact showing clearly through its odd fantasy-padding (lions in the garden, headmistress married to snake-charming Eastern Prince), and can surely be taken as an honest record of experience. What will interest you is the fascinatingly likely picture it draws of the fighting friendship between protégée and patroness. Mrs. Orr-Ewing did a brave thing when she invited this rawest of peasants into her refined and refining community; that it was the action (as she reveals in her preface) of a writer *manquée* out to help genius makes it also a rather touching piece of human nature, and illuminates the generous, often misunderstanding patience that the book puts across with wicked skill. I still don't quite understand the literary set-up between Berthe and her postmaster, but between them they certainly strike authenticity, and in never a word too many.

Are you daunted by the very dust-jacket of yet another *New Yorker* collection of stories? Do you recoil from your dreadful foreknowledge of the cool precision of the masterly prose waiting in its clean, well-spaced print? Try *Mr. Engel's Eye* and shed those mean feelings after even fewer pages than usual. Patricia Collinge does have the expected *New Yorker* virtues, but adds something. I can only pinch from the blurb and call it love. Mr. and Mrs. Engel, two well-off Americans touring Italy, he so cagy, she so eagerly gulping foreignness, could so easily be mere butts of humour; their chronicler goes deeper and comes up with richness. The story "Chow!" is a particular treasure, a most subtle picture of the two approaches to a new language abroad.

The scent of face-powder clings to *Three Men on The Left Hand*, a sophisticated American novel off which I warn avowed non-likeners of women's books. The

thing about such a book of course is that it's the woman in it who matters; events and issues flow to that great ultimate goal, whether she finds happiness. But in the process of getting the right man on to the last page with the blue-eyed photogenic career woman, Ilka Chase tells an often compelling story of crooks in politics and big business, in fact at the point where the truth-hounds begin to sniff a frame-up the toughest reader will find this novel hard to put down.

—ANGELA MILNE

**Jeeves in the Offing.** P. G. Wodehouse. *Herbert Jenkins*, 13/6

Many years ago Mr. Wodehouse replied to critics who complained that his books contained the old Wodehouse characters under new names by pointing out that his latest novel contained the old Wodehouse characters under their own names. *Jeeves in the Offing* contains, as well as Wooster and Jeeves, Aunt Dahlia, Sir Roderick Glossop, Bobbie Wickham, the Preparatory School head Aubrey Upjohn and even the silver cow-creamer. It also includes many of the traditional episodes and metaphors. In its constant reminders of past pleasures it is aimed at old faithfuls among the public. I do not know whether it would puzzle newcomers, or whether what the old faithfuls would feel they had met a good many times before would strike the virgin reader as novel and ingenious. Anyhow, one can no more read Mr. Wodehouse aloofly than one can see *Alice in Wonderland* with fresh eyes.

—R. G. P. P.

#### CRITIC IN THE STALLS

**Six Thousand and One Nights.** W. A. Darlington. *Harrap*, 18/-

Mr. Darlington began as a dramatic critic just after the First War, and here

very readably he examines the ups and downs of the theatre in his time, with special reference to acting. In his early days as a playgoer his taste was strongly for realism, but now he believes that Shaw's victory over Irving and the romantic theatre was won at a cruel cost. His eyes were opened to the true excitements of Shakespeare by Granville-Barker's Savoy productions of 1912, which made Tree seem absurdly out of date. After the dreadful bleakness of the '20s the audiences of the '30s were more intelligent, because the talkies had drained off the more frivolous elements; and by the end of the decade the once-despised classical actor was at the top of his profession.

It saddens Mr. Darlington that our theatre's choice of plays should partly be dictated by provincial bus companies, but he thinks that acting is better than at any time in living memory. This is a wise and balanced book, written with humour.

—ERIC KEOWN

#### ESTO PERPETUA

**Venice.** James Morris. *Faber*, 30/-

**The Stones of Venice.** John Ruskin (edited and abridged by J. G. Links). *Collins*, 21/-

"I am a reporter," says Mr. Morris modestly, explaining that his book is neither a guidebook nor a history. In fact it is both, for though he has set himself to write no more than a report on contemporary Venice, he has incorporated in it as much history as a non-specialist could need, and an account of the present-day city that contains far more information than most guidebooks and presents it far more readably. His book is divided into three sections, the People, the City and the Lagoon, and he writes of them all with knowledge and with humour (Venetian women's eyes, he



"Don't be ridiculous, Walter!"



notes, "are sometimes a heavy-lidded greenish-blue, like the eyes of a rather despondent armadillo"). Readers are warned not to be deluded by Mr. Morris's copious information and the splendid photographs he has chosen into the belief that they now know all about Venice; their proper reaction should be to telephone their travel-agents and book a visit, or another visit, to this wondrous city before the *motoscafi* and the *vaporetti* shake it into the sea.

Mr. Links has performed a useful service by condensing into 250 pages the three damn'd thick square books of Ruskin's great work. Ruskin himself reduced the 450,000 words of the complete book to a vest-pocket edition of a mere 140,000, but without much discrimination (he left out the whole of the chapter on "The Nature of Gothic" but kept an index comprising one-third of the new book); Mr. Link has made his cuts in the light of other, possibly better, opinions than Ruskin's. Ruskin would no doubt have damned the whole project, but the fact is that a lot of people will probably read this version who would otherwise never read any version at all. Still, while the text has been cut with skill and judgment, was it necessary to be quite so ruthless with the plates?

— B. A. YOUNG

#### INSIDE STEPHEN CRANE

**Stephen Crane: Letters.** Edited by R. W. Stallman and Lillian Gilkes. *Peter Owen*, 35/-

Crane has aroused more interest among American bibliographers than he did in his lifetime among American critics. This thorough collection of every scrap of paper he left will provide a firm foundation for future Crane scholars; but its intrinsic interest is small. Crane, whether boisterous or mendicant, was a dull correspondent and much the most interesting part of the volume is the Appendix of letters describing him.

He was always playing some part, the tough kid from the Bowery, the stetsonned Westerner, or the Lord of Brede Manor, his Sussex country house, where he once produced a play called *The Ghost*, in which James, Gissing, Conrad and Wells collaborated. One of the first of the expatriates, he tried to acclimatize himself in Europe by lavish entertaining and was always in debt and overworking to get out of it. *The Red Badge of Courage* haunted him. He wore his life out trying to equal and surpass it. It became a dreaded rival.

— R. G. G. PRICE

#### THE OLD MASTER ON THE H-BOMB

**Deterrent or Defence.** B. H. Liddell Hart. *Stevens*, 30/-. Though not as fresh as the title-page promises (one essay dates from 1952, an æon ago for strategists) Captain Liddell Hart's views on defence in the nuclear age are vital reading both for students of strategy and for the shriller opponents of nuclear armament. In essence, he believes that nuclear parity makes atomic warfare improbable, and calls for a new study of conventional defence. Stimulating, even if only of argument.



"Keep 'em flying, chaps."

#### CREDIT BALANCE

**The Asparagus Trench.** John Lodwick. *Heinemann*, 12/6. The first section of a proposed autobiography on which John Lodwick was engaged when he was killed in an accident. It deals with his prep-school days, and the main figure in it is his enchanting grandfather. A characteristically gay and perceptive *bonne bouche* from one of the least easily spared writers of our age.

**A Book of French Wines.** P. Morton Shand. *Cape*, 30/-. A completely-revised version of Mr. Shand's indispensable book, which must surely contain every known fact about every French wine and is admirably free from œnophiles' camp.

**Survival.** Ed. John M. Fowler. *MacGibbon & Kee*, 18/-. A collection of essays on the cause, nature and effects of fallout from nuclear explosions. Technical, but not too technical for a devoted layman. Sane, balanced, unpolitical, but leaving no

room for doubt about what fallout will do if it is given a chance.

**Betsy Sheridan's Journal.** Ed. William Lefanu. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 30/-. Family letters from Sheridan's kid sister. Domestic trivia, political gossip, oddments of social history. Important for eighteenth century biographers and possibly for political and theatrical historians; good dipping for the general reader. How curious to find, in that stratified society, the children of an actor as Royal cronies.

**Equal Partners.** James Tucker. *Chapman and Hall*, 14/-. Lecherous, ambitious, unsuccessful provincial journalist quixotically tries to protect sacked atom-physicist from press hounding and loses promotion. Sentiment and bitterness hackneyed but the story keeps moving and the apparently expert detail on press methods is fascinating and horrifying.



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BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

## FOR WOMEN



## What is the Matter with Men?

## 4: Intellectuals

LIVE and let live. We women are quite happy to let the intellectuals live—in their exquisite Regency villas in Hackney Marshes or wherever the up-and-coming new intellectual neighbourhood is now. Let them there fuss with their wrought ironwork and their cooking to their heart's content. We have nothing against them; we are grateful when they produce their bits of art and literature (often it is only bits) to help make life more beautiful or better understood. It's just that we women—all right, then, we average women—do not wish to get caught up with intellectuals and are jolly glad we haven't married one.

What is an intellectual? Easy. Intellectuals are the most instantly identifiable stratum at any Bloomsbury expense-account party. In their faces and their quite tidy clothes they look remarkably similar (even their hair grows right), and they all have The Voice—the one that women automatically associate with pastry-making and potato-doing, because it is the voice of the Home Service at 12.10 on Sundays. So even if we don't go much to parties we are all pretty well aware of the type.

The voice is a necessary part, we realize, of the intellectual's equipment; with it he may make the acid comments which are part of his equipment too, being the side-effects of his consuming analytical interest in people, his obsession with the infinite whatnot of human relationships, the human predicament, the butterfly on the pin, the amoeba under the microscope. All very praiseworthy, no doubt, we women muse to ourselves as we stand about at these

parties, uttering our hopeful clichés and looking awed at the scandal being bandied about; all no doubt the proper study of mankind and the right true end of the questing mind, but how would we like it round the home? Wouldn't it turn into a feud with the upstairs flat, to what-do-you-think-she-said gossip about the Daily Help? And, dash it, isn't that sort of thing *our* vice?

Intellectuals—they used in our girlhoods to be called highbrows, who were defined once and for all as those educated beyond their intelligence; just as cynicism (and all intellectuals are cynics) has been defined as a deficiency disease. We don't want that round the house either; it's a disease that promotes over-rude health in the opposite number. Imagine us average women, toughies at the best of times (have you ever seen a man lunching happily off a slab of old cheese and the baby's left-over groats?) having to bat off our mate's world-weary aphorisms and manage the housekeeping money—why, soon we'd be refusing to admit that there was a human predicament at all, renouncing even what intelligence we were born with. And then all that education hanging about waiting to trip us up. The Proust-reading we ourselves never had time for owing to being too busy earning our livings like any decent modern girl. "No, darling, I haven't actually got round to Kafka either but I know just what you mean." "It's silly but I always muddle Sartre and Anouilh, in a way." We can see it leading to one big horrible showdown, with us beating the paprika pot on our chi-chi Dodecanese peasant

supper-table in our jasmine-hung dining recess and shouting "Why the hell is everything foreign better than everything English? Why are you always so ghastly in the fashion with how you think and speak? Why don't you come off it?"

Any such outburst would be partly from the strain of years of dealing with the foodmanship and winemanship inseparable from modern intellectuals. Gone is the time when Shelley strode the pavements reading and gnawing a loaf; to a poet these days a quick bite means a ghastly ritual of bay-leaf and garlic, chopping and slicing, browning and simmering and stock-reducing and wineglassful-adding. That's right, we women have never really taken to the cooking mystique which now grips the country. Years of groats and old cheese have given us the sturdy idea that food's only food, and you eat to live.

Not that we don't think a touch of variety and *panache* isn't a good thing with cooking—as we are quick to tell our husbands when we place before their suspicious eyes some exciting new dish copied out from the hairdresser's. Our husbands, bless them; may their little ways never change. "What's that on your head?" "What on earth have you done to your eyes?" "Candles? Have the lights fused, then?" These are the things we expect, endure, adore in husbands. They go with a rock-like efficiency in the face of burglar-noises, moths, overflowing cisterns, neighbour-troubles; a quality we are not so silly as to expect from those who follow the agonizing trail set by Art.

In fact to be fair to intellectuals we should read, see, hear, meditate on their achievements; but not meet too many of them too often.

—ANGELA MILNE

## Sadly Missed

MY feet are up.  
I'm sitting down.  
I've even time to natter.  
In the house  
All quiet as a mouse,  
No sound of any clatter.

The china is clean.  
The silver is bright.  
I seem to have oodles of leisure.  
I've money to jingle,  
I might almost be single.  
The reason? I've sacked the "Treasure."

—CHRISTINE FARRAR

## Ours Not To Reason Which

**G**UARDING your marriageable daughters would be so much easier if you had the slightest clue as to which of the milling throng was eligible to be guarded against. It is not so much a question of building on false premises, as skating on ice which may not yet have formed. The whole set-up bristles with faux-pas, leaps in the dark, and false scents.

Maybe this is nothing new, but at least the hawk-eyed Mums of the last generation had something to go on, and could assess when a parental pull or push would be for the best. There were give-aways then, like the careless dropping of a Christian name, and—although conservatories and blushing (those wonderful aids)—were out, there were still things like disappearing for three dances running at a Commem Ball or the sudden discovery of a passion for lawn tennis or amateur theatricals. At least the parents knew who qualified for suspicion.

But nowadays there seem to be no right trees to bark up. For instance, after Francis had gone to the Far East, and Bill had been dismissed (I think with a flea in his ear) and we seemed always to have some Sunday lunch left over for Monday since Hector appeared less frequently (unannounced) to grace our table, there was Charles. Charles must have spent pounds dating Marigold on delicate picture-postcards of the rarer wild-flowers. She bought stout shoes and went on nature rambles with him. As I see it now, Marigold was only "resting," and keeping her hand in, but it took some pretty diplomatic probing to arrive at anything even approximating to an appreciation of the situation. Savagely hacking caked mud from the soles of her brogues with the knife which I keep for the more recalcitrant type of old potato, she looked up at me, puzzled. "Charles? THAT drip?" was all she said. I hadn't much liked Charles, anyway.

But, blind fool that I was, I went on niggling and—agog for midnight confidences—sitting up with hot drinks, only to get raspberries or Dead Sea fruit in exchange. In the Stanislaus period, when our own use of the telephone was limited to accepting reversed charges, the atmosphere tended to strain. We did try to remember about moving with the times, but it was aggravating not to

know whether the astronomical telephone bills we were paying were in a good cause or not. Stanislaus, we learned later, had merely wanted to practise his colloquial English before embarking seriously on a courtship elsewhere.

Simon was the one who occupied the spare-room for ten consecutive weekends, eating the bedside biscuits as he sat in there alone, practising the guitar, which did not seem to us the stuff of passion.

Let it not be supposed, however, that these named single spies were anything but temporarily outstanding units of an infinite battalion. Our long sentences of mystified uncertainty ran, as it were, concurrently.

Temporarily relaxing from the struggle one evening, I was glancing through one of the publications issued by a consumer association, and realizing how searchingly they inquired into the relative merits of rival birdseeds, bathroom scales, and the prevention of bald-

ness, and how impartially they reached their conclusions, I decided to submit the four current "Products" to a similar test. Under such headings as Jones-rating, status symbols, inlawability, and (with a hollow laugh) "prospects," I set to work. Points were allotted, and I was pleased when, hours later, Jeremy came out as the "Best Buy." He was the one who laughed at our jokes, and wore handknit (*Mum fecit*) sweaters, and was heir to a rich uncle in a progressive business. Furthermore, we thought that Marigold liked him.

We kept up our records, sorting out the order of merit from time to time, for about six months, with Jeremy maintaining his place in the lead. We only closed the books on the day when Marigold apprised us of the fact that she had promised her hand in marriage to John. Naturally we were just a little disappointed that our "Best Buy" rating had proved our inadequacy yet once again. John was not even on our books. We do not, however, blame the system or even regret our industry. It did make things a little tidier for us at the time, and we are hopefully filing the remainder of the blank forms for when Jenny comes on the market.

— MARGOT CROSSE



"They're a perfect match—he's a compulsive eater and she's a compulsive cook."



## Toby Competitions

## No. 128—A Game for England

**D**ESCRIBE or invent a new sport to be introduced into the Olympic Games at which Britain has a strong chance of winning. Limit 100 words.

A framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up receive a one guinea book token. Entries by first post on Wednesday, August 31. Address to TOBY COMPETITION No. 128, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

**Report on Competition No. 125**  
(Familiar Lines)

There was a sympathetic response to the appeal for occasional verse celebrating the first tramcar, at Birkenhead, a hundred years ago. The note of pomp and circumstance was caught successfully by a good many and others recaptured MacGonagall faithfully. Quite a few good lines were barred because they were written as of now, retrospectively, which is not occasional verse. Historical accuracy—e.g., was it horsedrawn or powered?—was ignored for this purpose. The winner, after a second and even a third look, was:

**ERIC SWAINSON**  
27, HIGHFIELD AVENUE  
MELTHAM  
HUDDERSFIELD

on the ground that his contribution was the most authentic echo of the spirit of the age:

Loud raise the cry of "Welcome to the Tram!"

Yet doubts assail the cautious from within;

They fear that foes of freedom, ushered in

## Disguised as Progress, British roads may

They clamour: "Let no whalebone stay the flow

They clamour; "Let no whalebone stay the  
Of sweet Britannia's motions, or make slow  
Her transports, or her racing passions bind!"

Dread not, ye faint-hearts, loss of Birkenhead!

Her virgin ways have but espous'd the rail

(Whose rule enhances Liberty's design)

As novices in convents take the veil.

So Discipline to Progress fast is wed:

## Advance, Battalions of the Tramway Line!



"Jennifer!"

It is only fair to the runners-up in this case to distinguish between the qualities that earned them book tokens. Number Two is another salute to the period style:

As once the waves did murmur Argo's fame,  
So now th' astounded cobblestones proclaim  
"Good speed our tramway." Next, this blessing said,  
The crown of bay is placed on Birkenhead.  
Forth from thy mews (my Muse commands it) move,  
Capacious brake, now wedded to the groove.  
See where the Managing Director waits,  
Like Jason—grant there be no Hylas, Fates.  
The Peerage deigns, goodly shareholders too,  
With Civic Dignity to join the queue.  
Not now the numerous artisan shall ride:  
This lap none doth ascend but Wirral's pride.  
Trustworthy driver, urge thy steed. May Peace  
And Commerce smile to yield a Golden Fleece.

F. J. Lelièvre, 1a, College Avenue, Londonderry

The third and fourth are irresistible MacGonagalls:

Most beautiful Tramway of the City of Birkenhead,  
On which passengers may travel, without fear or dread,  
In this year 1860, from the 30th of August,  
And so keep ladies' frills from getting all mud or dust,  
Or sit on the upper deck in the sun, feeling grand and merry,  
From Birkenhead Park all the way to Woodside Ferry,  
As the panting mounts, from thoughts of whose strength the mind  
finches.

Draw the car swiftly along on wrought-iron rails of gauge 4 ft. 8½ inches, Oh it is a magnificent sight that nobody will forget, And just think how railways have grown from Stephenson's "Rocket."

So perhaps in a hundred years it may not be a dream,  
And in 1960 there will be tramcars going by *steam*.

**J. A. Lindon, 89 Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey**

O Birkenhead, thou art most fortunate I ween,  
For in thy noble streets the first tramway is to be seen;  
And I trow that this tramway is indeed a great invention,  
For it was thought of not by accident but by intention.  
Its silvery tramlines are a triumph of modern engineering,  
And wondrous it is I wot how they simplify the task of steering.  
The gallant driver fears not the cold winds from the Mersey,  
Protected as he is by his goggles and a thick woolly jersey.  
O beautiful Birkenhead, be proud of thy Mayor so bold,  
And of his Corporation which is a wonder to behold.

A. C. Embleton, 14 Devonshire Terrace, London, W.2

And a highly commended Locksley Hall, not a first prize on the ground that Tennyson would have turned on a different tap if he had been celebrating an occasion:

For I dived into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be,  
Heard the squealing of the tram tracks and the rattle of the bells  
As the future loads of mashers, spivs and teds and knuts and swells  
Rode the many-wintered trams that led the clanging rookies home.  
If this Birkenhead invention to such length of years should come—  
For it moves but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point,  
And the ferrous rails lack silence and the rails are out of joint—  
That some other form of transport should put this one to its rest,  
Shall we see these ancient tramways sloping slowly to the West?  
From their lightnings all the current of their being fade away?  
Better ride on Shanks's pony or a cycle of Cathay!  
Better they and we were lying underneath some mountain range  
Ere the peoples spin no longer down the ringing grooves of change!

**Peter Hendry, 13 Woodland Rise, Oxted, Surrey**

The high moral tone justified this extract:

The man is a tram, remember.

Whose life is the tramway track:

But he must go ever forward

And not, like the tram, come back.

*Miss Vera Telfer, 27 Lauderdale Mansions, Maida Vale, W.9*

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